GOVERNMENT AND OPINION IN THE GAMBIA

1816 - 1901

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ABSTRACT

The British colony of the Gambia was founded in 1816 by a military detachment and a community of British merchants with their dependents transferred from Senegal. Their purpose was to check illegitimate trade by slavers, and to promote legitimate trade.

But participation in the river trade — in wax, gold and ivory — was fraught with difficulties, among them rivalry from French traders operating from Albreda, and constant obstruction along trade routes in the interior. Nor was commercial activity facilitated by the development of the groundnut. Indeed, dependence on a single cash crop created an unstable economy; for which reason the British Government planned to cede the colony to France.

Until 1888 the colony was governed, intermittently, from Sierra Leone; and the resulting delay in the execution of laws and the administration of justice caused serious hardship.

Wesleyan missionaries had arrived in the colony soon after its foundation and embarked upon evangelisation and educational work there. With the influx of Liberated Africans from Freetown, missionaries became agencies for their rehabilitation. To the work of Wesleyans was joined that of Roman Catholics and Anglicans in the latter half of

the nineteenth century. With the consolidation of Islam in the river states by reform movements of the mid-nineteenth century, missionary labour, especially in the field of education, was seriously retarded.

This investigation into the history of the Gambia has had as its subject matter the development of communities in the colony, their relations with each other and with the colonial Government which, after 1842, consisted of a Governor, an Executive Council and a Legislative Council with unofficial representation. The study centres on articulate groups and individuals in the colony, in an attempt to analyse public opinion in the period.

1901 is our closing date, for with it came the declaration of a British protectorate over all the river states.

PREFACE

This is a historical study of communities in the Gambia in the nineteenth century, with particular reference to their relations with British authority in that settlement.

Apart from the monumental work done by J.M.Gray in 1949, studies on the Gambia have been of a highly specialised nature, spotlighting a tribe like the Wolofs, or, an aspect of diplomatic history, such as the recent study of Anglo-French relations in the Gambia in the mid-nineteenth century by Professor J.D.Hargreaves. Whatever the study, the Gambia has generally featured as only an item within a wider field of investigation. While explorers and traders from the seventeenth century onwards did give some attention to the area, their writings were limited to descriptive presentations of the river states and their peoples.

It was, therefore, my original intention to investigate in detail a period of Gambian history from the point of view of the inhabitants of the country. The topic selected for such a study was the Legislative Council of the Gambia, my aim at that time being to consider the growth of nationalism among urbanised Africans through the role played by their representatives in the legislature. But once

I had embarked upon research , I soon discovered that it was impossible to pursue this investigation in the absence of verbatim reports of the Gambia Legislative Council. Further, I did not particularly wish to limit myself to a constitutional study modelled on the work done by Martin Wight and others on Legislative Councils in other British colonies. Rather, I was concerned to know more about the societies which had produced articulate men for the legislature.

It was therefore easy to shift the emphasis from opinion expressed by unofficials in Legislative Council to public opinion expressed by individuals or groups within a wider context. Inevitably, this led me to examine the communities which produced the leaders, in particular Liberated African leaders, who expressed opinion on major issues which affected the Gambia in the nineteenth century. What, then, were these issues ?

It was necessary to be selective here, but it was not possible to avoid those issues already treated in Gray's " History of the Gambia ", especially as a reinterpretation of the African point of view was required. Although I found this book a very useful standard history to which I constantly referred, as my research into original

sources progressed it became clearer to me that Gray had set himself to write the history of British traders and administrators in the Gambia, to the neglect of the African inhabitants themselves. In his work, African opinion was interesting but usually incidental.

The problems of administration dealt with by Gray could not be omitted in this thesis, but this aspect is used chiefly to provide a framework in which public opinion can be considered in relation to British policy. In this investigation, the Government is synonymous with the military Commandant, the Governor and Council, the Governor and faction inter alia - depending upon the period of time under consideration - with the authoritative presence of the Secretary of State or of some Colonial Office official continually felt.

It is my hope that I have succeeded in my attempt to show that Africans were living fully and participating in the making of their own history; that urbanised Africans, at least, were not unaware of the major issues of their day. In short, that the Liberated African community of Bathurst became a most articulate, and therefore dynamic, element in this nineteenth century society.

I wish to record my deep appreciation of the encouragement and assistance I have received from my two supervisors, Professor John Fage who supervised my research for two years and showed great interest in the subject matter, and Professor Roland Oliver who gave me valuable advice during the actual writing of the thesis.

My thanks are also due to Professor Hargreaves who allowed me to see in manuscript Chapter IV of his recently published book " Prelude to the partition of West Africa "; to Monsieur Maurel of the Archives Department, Dakar, Senegal, who kindly microfilmed for my use French documents relevant to the history of the Gambia; to the Principal of the Sierra Leone Grammar School for sending me early historical records of the school; to his Excellency, Sir Edward Windley, who put at my disposal all historical documents available at Government House and at the Secrétariat, Bathurst, Gambia; to Mr Naylor, Chairman of the Methodist Mission in the Gambia, for allowing me to study the documents of the Mission; to Mr Henry Jones of Bathurst, who provided me with valuable oral material on Gambian merchants; and last, but not least, to the Keeper of the Public Record Office and the Librarians of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Colindale Library, the Methodist Missionary Society and United Africa House for their kindness and consideration.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE RIVER GAMBIA

In 1738, Francis Moore wrote in the preface to his "Travels into the Inland parts of Africa" that his aim was to describe the Gambia - "a country, much talked of, and little known". A succession of European traders and travellers had been attracted to the banks of that river since Alvise da Cadamosto, a Portuguese explorer, sailed into the lower river in 1455. But the thin red line on the map of West Africa was no better known in 1911 when Mary Gaunt was writing for The Morning Post: "A great and mighty river ... one of the great waterways of the world though the world barely knows of its existence; this is the Gambia ... Think what the possession of a waterway like this should mean to a maritime nation, think what a Naboth's vineyard it must be to the French whose boundary is but six miles away on either bank." The noble and majestic river had captured the imagination of yet another traveller.

Rising a short distance from the town of Labe, in what is now the Republic of Guinea, the river Gambia flows in a north-westerly direction through Tenda, and meanders considerably in a westerly course towards the Barracunda Falls, where ledges of laterite rock form a barrier which impedes navigation. From the Falls, the river becomes tidal, and is navigable by

steam vessels, those of fifteen hundred tons burden reaching McCarthy Island (at a distance of one hundred and seventy-six miles from the estuary) where the river is a mile wide. In its lower course, a succession of islands with romantic names - Baboon island, Deer island, Elephant island, Dog island - makes an interesting feature. None of these islands is habitable except by fauna; being formed of silt and sand brought down from the upper river, they are mostly water-logged when the river is in flood in the rainy season. Continuing its serpentine course, and intersected by creeks and rivulets, many of which are navigable by local craft, the Gambia river finally enters the Atlantic Ocean at latitude 13° 30' north of the Equator, on the great bulge of West Africa. The estuary is twelve miles wide, extending from Jinnack creek on the north bank to Cape St. Mary on the opposite shore. Here the largest island of all, St. Mary's island, nestles in the curve of the bank, and with a number of sandbanks forms a small delta.

The river valley is low-lying , its lower banks abounding in mangrove swamps, behind which lie fertile alluvial lands for rice cultivation. It is only in the upper river that the country is undulating with low bush and parkland, where the sandy soil is suitable for millet and groundnut cultivation. Here, ironstone cliffs receding from the banks, rise from twenty to thirty feet above water level in the dry season. In former days when the countryside was thickly wooded and less cultivated, herds of elephant and buffalo roamed the land. Dog-faced baboons still inhabit some of the islands and destroy the crops on the mainland; crocodiles fester the

river and creeks; while the abundance of fish in the estuary was a great attraction to European travellers in West Africa in the nineteenth century, such as the Bowdiches.

Owing to its distance from the Equator, the Gambia territory enjoys a milder climate than the rest of British West Africa. For six months of the year, from November to April, a cool, dry, north-east wind from the Sahara desert, called the Harmattan, keeps temperatures down to as low as the fifties at night. The annual rainy season, on the other hand, lasting from June to September or October, brings heavy floods to this low-lying region; with oppressive humidity, decaying vegetation, and a sudden growth in the insect population, the season was as deadly to human existence as in any other part of the Coast, before the discovery of malaria or of anti-malarial drugs.

The Gambia region has no geographical boundaries, and is best regarded as a distribution of small kingdoms huddled on a river which binds them to each other and exposes them to influences from the Atlantic and the Sudan. In 1806, J.B. Durand, a former Governor of St. Louis, reported that he had found eight kingdoms on each bank of the river, all of them small, "nearly alike", and governed by "a multitude of petty princes, who all take the title of king ...."[1] And as there was no overlord to whom all owed allegiance, most

1. J.B. Durand, "A Voyage to Senegal", (London, 1806, in translation), pp. 37 & 38.

of the states were constantly engaged in bitter rivalry with each other in order to assert their independence. The powerful states in the river were not really Barra and Foigny, as Durand believed, but the interior kingdoms of Wuli (the most easterly state on the north bank), Cantora (situated opposite on the south bank), and Saloum in the middle river. Richard Jobson, an English traveller in the seventeenth century, had observed that all kings in the river paid tribute to the kings of these three states.[1] But by the nineteenth century, by virtue of living away from their overlords, many towns had become nominal tributaries, "exclusively governed by their own chiefs."[2]

The pattern of political organization was the same in the majority of the states - a hierarchy of kings, chiefs, alcades and elders constituted the government in Barra, Wuli, and all other Mandinka states. Kings were generally revered by their subjects from whom they received tribute or customs, but none could rule without consultation with the elders of the people. In fact, stable government did not so much depend on the administrative ability of kings, as on the industry and wisdom of the alcades. They were the officials who distributed land, administered justice in minor cases, collected the king's customs, and in general, kept the machinery of the state going.

"If a person wants anything to be done by a good number of people," advised Francis Moore of the Royal African Company, "the best way is to apply

1. Richard Jobson, Extracts from "The Golden Trade" in "Great West African Explorers", edited by C.Howard & J.Plumb, (O.U.P. 1951) p.33.
2. Major W. Gray and Surgeon Dochard, "Travels in Western Africa", (London, 1825) p.75.

to the Alcade, who will agree with you about it, and order people to make dispatch with it; but if a factor does not take care to keep in with the Alcade, he will seldom or never get things done as they ought to be."[1] That was why all factories in the River were put under his immediate protection. Indeed, a senior alcade (the office of alcade was hereditary), was an officer of actual and potential authority, who might one day become king when it was the turn of his town to provide a candidate. The danger to all, however, was that a system of rotatory succession lent itself to intrigue and keen rivalry between collaterals.

Within contiguous states of fairly uniform political systems, was found a state like Barsally, later known as Saloum, with distinctive features from the bloc in which it formed a wedge on the north bank. Saloum was a Wolof state and therefore more akin to the coastal kingdoms in the Senegal than to those in the Gambia. Unlike Mandinka kings, its ruler was "so absolute, that he will not allow any of his people to advise with him, unless it be his Headman (and chief Slave) called Ferbro, viz. (Master of the Horse) ...." While Moore was trading in the Gambia, the king of Barra was "tributary to him of Barsally."[2]

Fogni, too, on the south bank, was more closely related to the tribes further to the south, out of which it projected into the Gambia, than to the riverain states which flanked it. All accounts agreed that it was a decentralized and fragmentary "empire" of isolated villages under village

1. Francis Moore, "Travels into the inland parts of Africa", (London, 1738) pp. 127 and 128.
2. Moore, "Travels", p.87.

heads, who were independent of each other, but who would always unite against a common enemy, like the Mandinkas who long attempted to subdue them.[1] And though the "emperor" received tribute from his subjects and their neighbours, he would seem to have been assigned the role of representative of his people, and regarded less as a political force. It was with him European traders negotiated. Sheltered behind Vintang creek, the Gambia's main tributary, Fogni was isolated from the rest of the Gambia, and yet accessible to it.

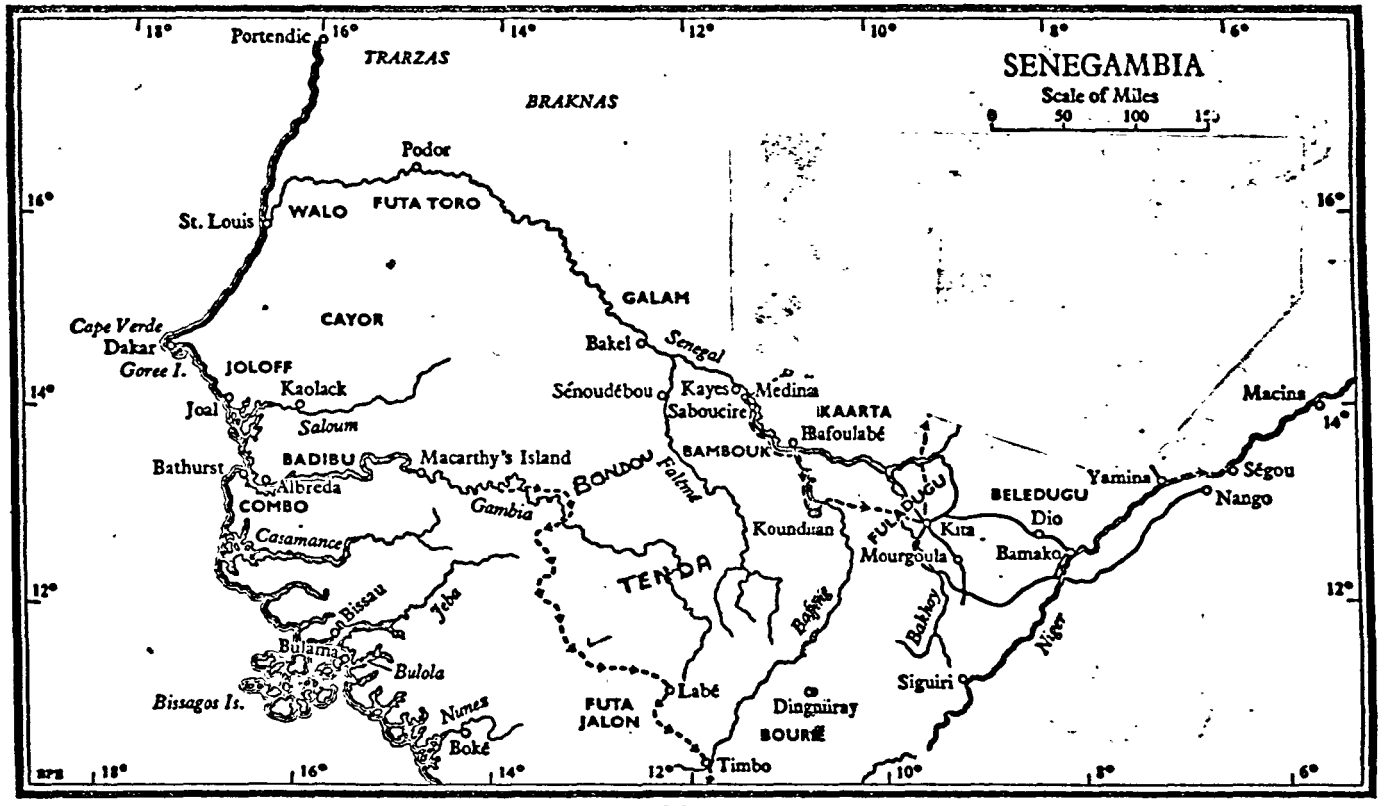
Though geographically outside our area, politically and economically, the confederacy of Fulbe theocracies which was stretched like a bow above the upper Gambia, was an integral part of it. Futa Toro on the south bank of the lower Senegal, Bondou to the north-east of Wuli, and Futa Jallon to its south-east formed this arc of highly centralised states. Each ruler bore the title of Almamy as a religious and political authority; and under Bondou leadership, exerted considerable pressure on all neighbouring states. Mungo Park observed that Bondou differed from the riverain governments because its inhabitants "are more immediately under the influence of the Mohammedan laws; for all the chief men ... and a large majority of the inhabitants of Bondou are Mussulmen ...."[2] Durand said the Almamy was revered for his sanctity and valour, and "had the absolute confidence of his own subjects, as well as of the neighbouring states, in so much that people come from all parts to buy his gris-gris and to kiss his feet."[3]

1. Moore, "Travels", p.36.
2. Mungo Park, Extracts from "Travels in the Interior ..." in "Great West African Explorers", p.95.
3. Durand, "Voyage", p.126.

Futa Toro presented a similar political organization, but there the people themselves possessed "considerable influence." The chiefs of the country, according to Mollien's account, created an Almamy whom they selected from the Muslim community in order to give their decrees greater weight with the people; and the Almamy could not take any step without consulting his council. Besides, he could be deposed by those who had set him up.[1] This was substantiated in a despatch of 1812 from Lt.-Governor Charles MacCarthy to the Secretary of State in which he reported that Aldondow, Prince of Futa Toro, had dismissed Almamy Baboucar; while a later despatch contained the information of his reinstatement by the same authority.[2]

Nor must the kingdom of Bambara on the Niger be omitted from this brief survey of political systems in the Western Sudan, for it was from that kingdom that all trade routes radiated to the Sene-Gambia region. Jenne, for example, was a populous and flourishing centre - "a concourse for all Strangers from all parts of the Soudan ...." Segu, the capital of Bambara, consisted of four distinct towns which were densely populated. It was a cosmopolitan state, which was nevertheless unified under an autocratic ruler. From the countries to the east of Bambara came merchants who "speak a different language from that of Bambara or any other kingdom with which they [the Bambaras] are acquainted."[3] So that here was in fact the frontier for the tribes of the Gambia, the furthest state to the east in which they could feel at home, among

1. G.T.Mollien, "Travels in the Interior of Africa", (London, 1820) p.160.
2. P.R.O., C.O. 267/36, 1812, 21st November, C.MacCarthy to Secretary of State.
3. Park, in "West African Explorers", p.128.


SENEGAMBIA
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FUTA TORO
GALAM
CAYOR
Cape Verde
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Goree I.
JOLOFF
Kaolack
Joal
Saloum
Bakel
Senegal
Sénoudébou
Kayes
Medina
Saboucire
KAARTA
Bafoulabé
BAMBOUK
Macina
Bathurst
BADIBU
Albreda
COMBO
Macarthy's Island
Gambia
BONDOU
Falémé
Yamina
Ségou
Nango
BELEDUGU
Dio
Kita
Bamako
Mourgoula
Koundian
FULADUGU
TENDA
Casamance
Bissau
Jeba
Buliama
Bulola
Bissagos Is.
Nunes
Boké
Labé
FUTA JALON
Dinguiray
BOURÉ
Timbo
Baffing
Bakhoy
Siguiri
Niger
18°
16°
14°
12°
10°
8°
6°

tribes they could understand and trade with.

The Gambia was a heterogeneous collection of tribes dominated by the Mandinkas, who had entered the river valley from the Sudan kingdoms of the medieval age. They had formed settlements all along the river banks till they reached the coast, where they established the kingdom of Barra. Durand described it as being "almost entirely peopled by strangers, as the natives of the country are there only few in number." The inhabitants, he said, were called "Mandingoes ... from the name of their native country Mandin ... which is situated four hundred leagues to the east and is prodigiously peopled, as is evident from the vast number of slaves which it furnishes every year."[1]

It was the hegemony of the Mali empire over a vast area for more than two centuries (1238–1468), which had facilitated the expansion of peoples. In the fifteenth century, Cadamosto reported that the Mandinka of the Gambia regarded the emperor of Mali as their overlord, and Diego Gomez, too, was told by Wolofs there that the bur, or ruler, of Mali controlled all the interior; but J.S. Trimingham holds that this probably meant no more than that the hegemony of that empire had reached the lower Gambia. With the expansion of its peoples, Mande Jula (Dyula) trading colonies were established, and the movements of agriculturalists were considerable.[2] This resulted in a

1. Durand, "Voyage", p.38.
2. J.S.Trimingham, "A History of Islam in West Africa", (O.U.P., 1962) p.83.

juxtaposition of villages of different elements who had learnt to live side by side, as in the Gambia where Mandinka, Serahuli and Fula villages are found adjacent to each other - the first two being agricultural communities, and the third stock-rearing, as well as having agriculture. Manding had absorbed diverse elements and moulded them into one culture. And in the Gambia, Mandinka became the lingua franca, so that if a trader could speak that language, he could travel from the river's mouth up to "the country of Joncoes [1] (alias merchants;) ... which country ... cannot by all reports be less than six weeks journey from James Fort."[2]

Apart from Mandinkas, the Wolofs were a dominant tribe on the north bank of the river, but their origin is uncertain, and their history belongs more to the Senegal than the Gambia. This tribe inhabited five states - Kayor, Baol, Walo, Sine, Jolof - on the Senegal river, and Saloum on the Gambia river. All of them had formerly owed allegiance to the ruler of Jolof, but from the sixteenth century onwards, one Wolof ruler after another had rejected the suzerainty of Jolof, whose "prosperity and strength began to decline, while the power and wealth of Kayor and Baol increased."[3] Thus, Saloum, too, secured its independence and spread its influence southwards to the banks of the Gambia. The juxtaposition of Wolof states in the Senegal to the Moorish states of the Sahara had influenced their culture in many ways. They were

1. Country of Joncoes: Moore explained that the name derived from the extensive commerce in slaves there (probably Bambara).
2. Moore, "Travels", p.39.
3. D.P.Gamble, "The Wolof of Senegambia", (London, 1957) pp.17-19.

excellent horsemen and very brave fighters; and from the fifteenth century, Islam had reached them through the Moors.

Numerically, the Jolas of Fogni were an important tribe in the Gambia, but their political system was such that they virtually failed to be influenced by other cultures or to spread their own, being content to preserve their customs, and avoid cultural contact with other tribes. It was partly for this reason that they were generally described by European travellers as a people living in a state of savagery, and ready to attack other negroes who passed through their country. Francis Moore called them "wild" pagans who worshipped idols.[1]

In the Gambia, the Fulas were of no political importance till the latter half of the nineteenth century. Living in small communities, generally adjacent to the king's town in a Mandinka state by which they sought protection, they were content with stock-rearing and farming. Indeed, their Mandinka neighbours employed them as herdsmen.[2] Serahulis were likewise only important for the economic development of the riverain states. They swayed no political power; but their participation in long distance trade was a characteristic feature of the Gambia trade.

1. Moore, "Travels", p.36.
2. Moore, "Travels", pp.32 & 33.

Among these distinct tribes there was a common factor in social organization - the institution of domestic slavery. The Wolofs, particularly conscious of pedigree, divided their society into freeborn (jambur or gör), and slaves (jam). So elaborate and rigid was social stratification that the freeborn were organised hierarchically, with royal lineages at the top and peasants, smiths, leatherworkers and gewels (griots) on the lowest rungs of the ladder.[1] If society was not so rigidly divided in other communities, all of them followed a similar pattern of slavery.

Generally, domestic slaves were an integral part of the family to which they belonged, and could not be sold except as punishment for crimes of treason, murder, or adultery. Slaves of a royal household, for example, enjoyed greater power than many a freeman, and often amassed wealth by demanding tribute in the name of their masters. Old men of slave-status enjoyed particular privileges, some of them were advisers to chiefs, they published their orders and saw that their commands were carried out. From an economic view-point, slaves were valuable property, but they also had a prestige value. Durand estimated that in Mandingo society, only one quarter of the people was freeborn, and they were related to the ruling class and were generally the organisers of trade; three-quarters of the population, he believed were domestic slaves whose primary task was to till the earth for their masters.[2]

1. Gamble, "The Wolof", p.44.
2. Durand, "Voyage", p.41.

The trade in our region was conducted by specialists, Mande-Julas and Serahulis who were called Slatees (or itinerant merchants) by early European traders. Over many centuries, the Julas had formed trading communities along a vast network of trade routes. For the convenience of owning domestic slaves, who farmed for them in their absence, enabled them to make long expeditions in pursuit of merchandise. By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, hundreds of settlements in Western Guinea were under their control, where many of them adopted the customs as well as wives from the people among whom they settled.[1] Long distance trade was virtually their monopoly, and it was said that it was "love for commerce" which had first brought Mande-speaking peoples to the very mouth of the Gambia.

As a caravan moved from town to town with its train of asses carrying merchandise, the Jula would join it with his own consignment of slaves laden with bundles of cotton cloth, gold, and carrying elephants' teeth (ivory). He had to be a man of astute judgment, who, by diplomacy, could reduce the amount of customs he was otherwise compelled to pay to all alcades in whose towns he stopped to trade. Mungo Park thought the duties imposed on Julas were very heavy, especially on the return journey of the caravans from the coast, when "in almost every town an ass load pays a bar[2] of European merchandise."[3]

1. Trimingham, "History of Islam", p.143.
2. A bar is "a denomination given to a certain quantity of goods of any kind, which quantity was of equal value among the natives to a Bar[r] of Iron, when this River was first traded to. Thus ... two pounds of gunpowder is a Bar[r], an ounce of silver is but a Bar[r]..."
   Francis Moore, "Travels", p.45.
3. Park in "West African Explorers", p.94.

Caravans of Serahuli merchants suffered most from rapacious alcades. Mollien's party was delayed in Tenda "on account of the arrival of a caravan of Serracollets [Serahuli] who were returning loaded with European commodities." The alcade "obliged them, inspite of their remonstrances, to give him several pieces of European stuff [cloth], powder, balls, and glass beads. This, in fact," the writer observed, "is always the way in which the Serracollets are treated; in consequence of their reputed wealth, heavier duties are imposed on them than on other traders."[1]

An equally important community engaged in trade along the Gambia river and in the overland trade southwards from Vintang creek was the Portuguese Mulattoes. They were the descendants of early Portuguese explorers and traders, who had lived in the riverain states and formed attachments with Mandinka women. Though they were now very little different from the Mandinkas, they continued to speak a version of the Portuguese language "called Creole, and as they christen and marry by the help of a priest sent yearly over hither from St. Jago ... they reckon themselves still as well as if they were actually white, and nothing angers them more than to call them negroes ...."[2] These traders gained such prominence in the European era, that their "creole" language was "sooner learnt by Englishmen than any other language in [the] River";[3] it was only next in importance to the lingua franca, and was spoken by all the Interpreters who served European traders.

1. G.Mollien, "Travels in the Interior", p.308.
2. Moore, "Travels", p.29.
3. Moore, "Travels", p.39.

Salt was the main commodity produced by the coastal states for inland trade before the arrival of European traders. From Joal, traders from Barra collected salt which they exchanged in the interior for millet and cotton cloths. And though the Wolofs to the north never had a reputation for long-distance trade, the salt and fish found on their coast formed a lucrative trade with the inland states. They also "dominated the trade in horses which were obtained from Mauretanians in exchange for slaves, and sold to the Mandinkas."[1]

In the well-watered areas of the Casamance, the Jeba and the Nunez, salt, fish and grain (in this region it was rice and not millet) formed the main commodities of trade among African tribes - the Feloups or Jolas, the Biafars and the Pepels. All these peoples spoke related languages[2] and traded with each other; and though trade among them was not the monopoly of specialists as in the Western Sudan, the Jolas did engage in an overland trade between Vintang and Cacheo, a journey which lasted three days. The Pepels of the Nunez were a sea-faring people, and they engaged in a coastal trade in the Bissagos Isles and as far as the Cape Verd Islands.

Yet trade was controlled, not by coastal peoples, but by the political rulers of interior kingdoms like Bondou. Strategically situated between the Gambia and Senegal rivers, this state had become "a place of great resort,

1. Gamble, "The Wolof", p.36.
2. Dietrich Westermann & M.A. Bryan, "Part II Languages of West Africa", (O.U.P., 1952) pp.16, 17.

both for the Slatees, who generally pass through it, in going from the coast to the interior countries, and for occasional traders, who frequently come hither from the inland countries to purchase salt." Through heavy duties collected from traders, the Almamy became "well-supplied with arms and ammunition." And once European factories were established in the two rivers, this ruler also derived an income from factors and their trading vessels. To this hive of commercial activity had immigrated Serahulis from Kajaaga to the north of Bondou. Mungo Park found them carrying on "a considerable trade ... bartering corn and blue cotton cloths for salt, which they again barter in Dentila and other towns for iron, shea-butter and small quantities of gold dust. They likewise sell a variety of sweet-smelling gums packed in small bags ...."[1] And not even inter-state wars could reduce the Serahuli passion for trade. While Bondou was such a commercial centre for such a variety of commodities, it was not surprising that the Almamy often brought pressure to bear on traders as a political weapon against rivals.

Trade then had its setbacks at every stage in this extensive network of trade routes; and politics in the interior states invariably affected commercial activity in the Gambia and Senegal. Often political alliances between rulers formed a net into which the long-distance trader was caught. His movement might be restricted or accelerated from one kingdom to the next in proportion as those kingdoms were enemies or allies. Richard Jobson was not altogether accurate in his assertion that Islam was a passport for Jula

1. Park in "West African Explorers", p.94.

merchants throughout the Western Sudan. Because they professed that religion, Jobson said that they had "free recourse through all places, so that howsoever the kings and countries are at warres, and up in armes,... yet still the Marybucke [Muslim] is a privileged person, and may follow his trade, or course of travelling, without let or interruption of either side."[1] Long-distance trade was not so easily protected by political rulers.

Discoveries on the West Coast by Portuguese explorers had been followed up by the establishment of factories and settlements by Portuguese traders. Geregia on the Vintang creek was both a trading station and a settlement with a church in the sixteenth century. But the Portuguese had very soon abandoned their stations in the Gambia for those in the Bissagos Isles and Angola. There were, however, other European adventurers to succeed them in the Gambia, notably the appearance of the Royal African Company whose main purpose in entering the river in the seventeenth century was to participate in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Making James Island its headquarters, the company also had store houses and factories in ports like Fattatenda and Yarbutenda in Wuli, to which slave caravans from the interior resorted. It was therefore a river that became familiar to a small body of Englishmen, Francis Moore being prominent among the traders of the eighteenth century. And, equally important, Julas and Serahulis learnt to transact business with these strange merchants.

1. Jobson quoted by Trimingham, "History of Islam", p.143, footnote 1.

With the appearance of European traders in the Gambia estuary, the influence of coastal states was immediately enhanced, and their economic position strengthened. The king of Barra, for example, imposed customs on all vessels and traders which entered his kingdom with merchandise for trade.[1] Indeed, the king now began to assume the kind of power hitherto enjoyed by interior rulers; for his state was now a flourishing entrepôt where merchants from inland countries transacted business with European clients. Durand called him "the most powerful and terrible of all the kings of the Gambia."[2]

Nor was the emperor of Fogni of less importance to the Europeans, since both English and French traders had built factories in his capital of Vintang. Unlike Barra, he was renowned for fair-play and for the protection he afforded all who traded with his people.[3] And mention is never made of customs exacted by him. Apart from slaves, the wax of Fogni was in great demand for European markets, being very plentiful and cleaner than what was available in other parts of the river. Indeed it was the custom of Portuguese Mulattoes to buy large quantities of this wax, "melt and purify it, form it into cakes and send it to Cachaux [Cacheo] where the magazines are established."[4]

European commercial activity in the river was facilitated by the existence of trade specialists; and to the factors of James Fort, the Portuguese Mulatto gave invaluable service. Though not unwilling to negotiate directly

1. Moore, "Travels", pp.20 & 45.
2. Durand, "Voyage", p.40.
3. Durand, "Voyage", p.38.
4. Durand, "Voyage", p.49.

with the Slatees, it would seem that where the Company found an experienced and honest Mulatto, it was prepared to employ him as agent. One of them was kept at the factory of Yanimaru in the upper Gambia for the sole purpose of buying corn and rice for the use of the fort. Their importance in the trade was such, that when Francis Moore was instructed to break off commercial relations with them, he replied:- "I am certain it will be a loss to the Company, there being as much trade to be made with them as with the Mundingoes ...."[1] These instructions were the result of keen rivalry between the Company and the Portuguese Mullatoes. One of the most prosperous middlemen in the river at that time was one Signor Antonio Voss, who kept a large number of domestic slaves to man his canoes which traded to the main river ports to collect slaves and tropical commodities brought down by the caravans.

It was not only as shrewd men of business that some members of this community excelled, but also as skilled mechanics. In 1730, some of them were brought over from St. Jago to repair James Fort.[2] Even their houses in the Gambia were more solid and spacious than those of their neighbours, and in their gardens they planted fruit and ornamental trees. In Barra, they had influenced indigenous architecture, so that "the king ... and the greatest people of his kingdom have similar places of residence."[3] It was unfortunate that by the nineteenth century, this contracting community had grown decadent. Most of its members became poor and idle with the abandonment of James Island by the Company, followed by the Abolition of the Slave Trade; and travellers

1. Moore, "Travels", p.165.
2. Moore, "Travels", p.47.
3. Durand, "Voyage", p.42.

said they passed their time "in the most disgusting state of libertinism ...."[1]

This then was to be the environment in which the first British colony in the West Coast of Africa was located in 1763. A British merchant, Thomas Cumming by name, recommended the commercial possibilities of the Senegal region to the Elder Pitt. Rich in gum, which was a French monopoly, the Seven Years' War with France provided, he thought, a good opportunity for the English to break that monopoly.[2] Thus in 1758, a British expedition captured the French forts on the Isle of St. Louis and Goree, successes which were described as taking "from the emeny one of the most valuable branches of their commerce." For France, as a chief silk-producing nation in Europe, was likely to suffer economically with the loss of the gum trade.

Peace negotiations in Paris in 1763 confirmed British acquisitions in the region during the war, and the Province of Sene-Gambia was created by Act of the British Parliament. Its constitution was modelled on that of the American colonies, with "like powers and authority ... as the differences of circumstance and situation will admit ...."[3] That an elaborate and expensive machinery of Crown Colony Government was set up when the Committee of the

1. Durand, "Voyage", p.42.
2. C.O. 267/12, 1756, 26th January, Thomas Cumming to William Pitt.
3. Order in Council quoted by E.C.Martin, "The British West African Settlements 1750-1821", (London, 1927) p.66.

Company of Merchants trading to Africa was in existence, indicated the value placed on the newly acquired territories by the British Government and its merchants. Granted that the Committee had its African headquarters at too great a distance from Sene-Gambia, and that a recent report on its affairs had revealed mismanagement and incapacity to defend trading forts along the Gold Coast, yet Dr. E.C. Martin's explanation for the creation of this distinctive province is of importance. She argues that there were significant differences between the two regions - Sene-Gambia and the Gold Coast - the former presenting an entirely different problem of government. "That problem was made up of a complex native question, an extensive inland commerce, unlike the sea board traffic of the Gold Coast, and an acute French rivalry, compared with which the Anglo-Dutch friction on the Gold Coast was a very minor matter."[1]

No attempt was made from Goree to establish a military post on the River Gambia, whose distance from the headquarters of the province deprived it, too, of the benefits of a civil administration. "Sometimes a Captain was sent there, and latterly a Lieutenant-Governor, but no civil officers. The consequence was the trade, for want of proper regulations dwindled almost to nothing."[2] This was the report on the Gambia made by the Chief Justice of the province, twenty years after its creation. British traders, however, for all the lack of protection continued to trade in the river, maintaining

1. Martin, "British West African Settlements", p.64.
2. C.O. 267/7, 1783, 6th March, Chief Justice Morse to Lord Sidney.

factories in the old trading ports of Vintang, Yanimaru, and others. Excursions up the Gambia were sometimes made by the military from Goree for the collection of building materials - oyster shells for making lime, and timber from the kingdom of Barra, according to an agreement made between the king and Governor Charles O'Hara in 1775.

The disintegration of the province of Senegambia began with the destruction of James Fort in 1779, and the capture of Fort St. Louis by French forces in the same year. And the peace treaty which terminated hostilities in 1783, ceded to France the key forts for the gum trade - Arguin, Portendic, Goree, St. Louis, Podor, Galam; while Britain kept her rights in the Gambia river and James Island, and was given liberty to carry on the gum trade in the vicinity of Portendick, without permanent settlements. For this privilege to trade on the gum coast, Britain was willing to accommodate French traders in the Gambia, where they had already established a factory at Albreda in the kingdom of Barra, opposite James Island.[1]

Shorn of what had been regarded as the most important and most profitable portion of the province, the Crown decided that its remnants no longer qualified for the elaborate system of Crown Colony government. Thus the province ceased to exist; and the Gambia was ruled very much as it had been before 1765, as "a subordinate administration to that at Cape Coast."[2] But the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe provided the motive for the recapture of Goree

1. Martin, "British West African Settlements", p.100.
2. Ibid, p.102.

in 1800, and St. Louis in 1809, by Britain, both of which were then reorganised as military posts under officers of the Royal African Corps, with headquarters at Sierra Leone.

Under the protection of the military, British merchants felt secure, and their numbers increased, many of them buying lots of land on the isle of St. Louis and on English island in the mouth of the Senegal. Having allied themselves to the local Mulatto women of property, called Senoras, women who bore them children and ran their households, these merchants engaged in the gum trade with the Moors, and began to accumulate property. It was a sufficiently lucrative trade to warrant Government patronage in the form of annual customs in blue bafts, scarlet cloth, amber, coral, pistols for the Moorish tribes who held the monopoly as gum producers. Indeed, it was the British Lt.-Governor (who was also head of the military) who negotiated with the Moors on the merchants' account.

It was no simple matter to negotiate with these tribes - the Trarzas, the Brackmas and the Marabouts of Armancour - who were distributed over a vast area to the north of the Senegal. The Moors were likely to refuse to do business with European traders if they were dissatisfied with the quantity of the annual customs; nor would they part with gum for goods other than those of a specialised nature, notably a variety of Indian bafts. Further, the English market for gum, while being lucrative, (in 1810 a ton of gum brought between £90 and £95, and was "an object in a national point of view")[1], yet

1. C.O. 267/32, 1809, 15th January, Major Maxwell to Lord Castlereagh.

it was a limited market. In 1812, for example, a Mr. Wilson, the principal British merchant in Senegal, was reported to have "thousands of pounds of gum in England without any demand."[1] The annual export of that commodity from the Senegal was estimated at one thousand tons, and that of 1810 was expected to "yield to the country nearly £140,000 out of which Government get nearly 10 per cent."[2]

The gum trade was seasonal, conducted between April and July, before the rainy season, and between September and January, after the rains. The Moors, who collected two crops of gum, brought them down to the "escales"[3] on the river Senegal, where they held open air markets until the rains gave the signal for retreat.[4] No middlemen were tolerated on their side, though European merchants employed Mulatto agents to transact business in the same way as they had used the Portuguese Mulatto in the river Gambia to collect slaves and tropical commodities for their vessels. After the trade in slaves, the gum trade was the most lucrative and valuable to European merchants until the mid nineteenth century, when the opening of the China Trade dislocated silk manufacture in Europe.

1. C.O. 267/36, 1812, 21st November, Lt.-Colonel MacCarthy to Bathurst.
2. C.O. 267/33, 1810, 10th March, Maxwell to Liverpool.
3. escale: "a port or place of call, of supply" (Harrap's Standard French Dictionary)
4. Durand, "Voyage", p.143.

After the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807, the British officer in command of the garrison in Senegal made it his responsibility to put the Act into effect in the area under his jurisdiction. With no military establishment in the Gambia, however, illicit trade flourished, and vessels sailing under Spanish colours were sure of a cargo, not only from native but also from European merchants in that River. It was a trade prejudicial to legitimate trade, which exposed individual British traders to attack from pirates and slavers. Lt.-Governor Charles MacCarthy, therefore, recommended to the Secretary of State, that "the immediate establishment of small garrisons in the Gambia" was the best way to retain command over Goree and Senegal.[1] And when it looked as if Britain might have to surrender Senegal to France at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, an argument in favour of securing an alternative establishment on the gum coast was presented, for it was feared that legitimate trade along the river Gambia would not compensate merchants for the total loss of gum.

These hopes never materialized; and though Britain retained her right to trade at Portendic, the treaty of 1814 permitted France to resume all the possessions she had held in 1792, including Albreda in the Gambia, and the forts of Goree and St. Louis. MacCarthy immediately began to plan the re-occupation of Fort James, for he was convinced that if this failed to be done, nor "Foreign vessels prevented from trading there, the whole of the trade of

1. C.O. 267/38, 1814, 17th May, MacCarthy to Lord Bathurst.

that important River will soon be in the hands of the Americans ...."[1] So thoroughly convincing were his arguments, that the Secretary of State gave instructions for reoccupation, and the transfer of the British community from the Senegal to the Gambia. Such then was the birth of the British Settlement in the Gambia in 1816.

1. C.O. 267/40, 1815, 12th July, MacCarthy to Bathurst.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNITIES IN THE SETTLEMENT OF ST. MARY'S ISLAND AND ITS DEPENDENCIES

1816 - 1850

The primary object of the reoccupation of James Island in the River Gambia by the British in 1816 was to establish a military post for the suppression of the slave trade. The Act of Abolition of 1807 had not prevented British and American vessels sailing under Spanish colours from entering that River to collect large cargoes of slaves for the lucrative slave markets of Cuba, Brazil and the Southern States of America.[1] For this reason Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State for the colonies, was prevailed upon by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles MacCarthy to approve his recommendation for a British settlement in that River. Strict instructions accompanied this approval, MacCarthy being warned not to incur any expense "which may have for its object a permanent establishment, or to erect any buildings beyond what may be absolutely necessary for the protection of the small detachment of troops employed in that River under Colonel Brereton."[2] British merchants, however, were to be free to undertake such ventures as they thought might encourage commercial activity with the natives. Indeed, it was also MacCarthy's wish that the settlement might "open a market in the

1. P.R.O., C.O. 267/29, 1810-11, Commission of Enquiry into the British West African Settlements, p.153 ff. by Thomas Ludlam and William Dawes.
2. C.O. 268/19, 20th July 1816, Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State, to Governor Charles MacCarthy.

very interior of Africa for British and Indian goods."[1] Equally enthusiastic for the future prosperity were the two officers of the Royal African Corps, Lt.-Colonel Brereton and Captain Alexander Grant, who effected the re-occupation of the River Gambia for the British.

Grant had sailed from Goree in March 1816 to renew a treaty which General Charles O'Hara, first Governor of the Province of Senegambia, had made with the King of Barra in 1775 by which James Island (25 miles up the River) was ceded to the British and foreign vessels forbidden to proceed beyond that point.[2] Having agreed to resume payment of a yearly stipend to the value of 300 bars or £75,[3] Grant took possession of the Island on the 19th of March 1816. With fifty men of the Royal African Corps, twenty four masons and carpenters with a fair number of labourers, he set to work immediately to repair the derelict fort on the Island with a view to making it safe as "an outpost".[4] For it had none of the strategic advantages of Banjoul Island at the entrance of the River, about three miles from the north bank and only a few yards from the south. It was an opinion shared by Lieutenant-Governor Colonel Brereton of Senegal who had followed Grant to the Gambia with reinforcement of thirty men.[5]

1. C.O. 267/42, 5th October 1816, Governor Charles MacCarthy to Lord Bathurst.
2. C.O. 267/47, 3rd January 1818, vol. 1. MacCarthy to Bathurst.
3. C.O. 267/42, 24th June 1816, Captain Alexander Grant to MacCarthy.
4. P.R.O., C.O. 267/42, 24th June 1816, Grant to MacCarthy.
5. C.O. 267/42, 18th May 1816, Lt. Governor Thomas Brereton to Lord Bathurst.

Banjoul, however, was devoid of habitation, no signs remaining of the "few stragling natives"[1] reported by Major Houghton to have been the only inhabitants there in 1783, although the clearing on Banyon Point with its "well of excellent water" and cotton stubble indicated recent occupation.[2] The rest of the Island was thickly wooded with a considerable number of large trees, and intersected by numerous creeks. To its owner, the King of Combo, it had no value except as a source of fibre for rope-making, until Grant approached him for its cession to the British Crown. On the 23rd of April 1816, formal possession was taken of Banjoul (now renamed St. Mary's Island), permission having been granted by the king for the erection of buildings and fortifications in return for an annual stipend of 113 bars or £25.6.8d. or 100 dollars.[3] Building operations began on Banyon Point, that being the most commanding situation. Large quantities of stone were made available by the king of Barra, oyster shells for lime-burning were abundant on the Island itself, as were rhuns and other hardwoods for beams and rafters and river craft.[4] Before the July rains, a barrack for accommodating eighty

1. C.O. 267/20, 24th February 1783, Daniel F.Houghton to Thomas Townshend. "Bunion Island"(St. Mary's) "is plentifully supplied with every necessary of life, cotton and indigo grows there spontaneously, and the few stragling natives who at present reside there, have great plenty of rice, corn, cattle and poultry..."
2. C.O. 267/42, 18th May 1816, Brereton to Bathurst; 24th June 1816, Grant to MacCarthy.
3. Ibid.
4. C.O. 267/42, 22nd August 1816, Brereton to Bathurst.

men was almost completed; and Grant had reported to Governor MacCarthy the facilities for trade with "the Combo country (abounding in wax, hides and fine ivory, the principal articles of commerce in the River) ..."[1] separated from St. Mary's only by a creek of about thirty yards in breadth.

He was confident that the traders from the interior who hitherto carried their goods to the depot at Jillifrey, opposite James Island, would now be willing to follow the factors to St. Mary's.[2] Many of these men were applying for grants of land in the newly founded settlement in the belief that trade would be less insecure where there was a detachment of troops for protection than in defenceless river stations. Governor MacCarthy too was all in favour of building up the Island which Brereton had described as "the key of the River",[3] and had in consequence given instructions for the withdrawal of the greatest part of the detachment which had been stationed on James Island during the rains.[4] Indeed he rejoiced that the settlement was already justifying its existence from its record of having intercepted five slavers since its occupation by British troops.[5] When Brereton returned to Goree, he proposed a scheme to British merchants who had settled there during the Napoleonic Wars: He would offer them free lots of land on

1. C.O. 267/42, 24th June 1816, Grant to MacCarthy.
2. P.R.O., C.O. 267/42, 24th June 1816, Grant to MacCarthy.
3. " " " 18th May 1816, Brereton to Bathurst.
4. " " " 5th October 1816, MacCarthy to Bathurst.
5. Ibid.

St. Mary's if they would undertake to erect "good, airy and substantial stone or brickhouses within a given time".[1] Thus he hoped to preserve the health of European immigrants by reducing the number of wooden buildings on the Island and indirectly increasing its value.

British merchants in Goree and St. Louis readily accepted the opportunity to move out of those places in 1816, for though the Treaty of Paris signed on the 30th May 1814 had stipulated that British merchants could carry on trade there on the same footing as French subjects, in practice pressure had been brought upon them to move out. It was the "vexatious conduct of the French Authorities of Senegal towards them", exhibited in the discriminatory duties levied on British imports which compelled them to seek their fortune elsewhere.[2] Circumstances were thus to save the Gambia settlement from remaining a mere outpost of the British Army as Lord Bathurst had planned.

It was, however, not southwards,but northwards to the gum deposits of Portendick and Arguin Island on the Atlantic Coast that they first looked.[3] Nor was this because of ignorance of the conditions of trade along the River Gambia, for a few Goree merchants like Thomas Joiner, by origin a Mandinka, had already established trading posts in the upper reaches of that River,[4]

1. P.R.O., C.O. 267/42, 12th June 1816, Brereton to Bathurst.
2. (C.O. 267/56, 21st January 1822, vol. 1. MacCarthy to Bathurst.
   (C.O. 267/80, 1815-26, 31st October 1817, William Forster to Mr. Goulburn - Under Secretary of State.
3. P.R.O., C.O. 267/38, 10th June 1814, MacCarthy to Bathurst;
   C.O. 267/46, 4th Oct. 1817, vol.2. William Forster to Henry Goulburn.
4. "Missionary Labours in Western Africa", p.176, by Rev.William Moister, published London 1866; Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, 1833, vol. 3. p.73, by Thomas Boteler, Commander of H.M. Sloop "Hecla".

and were familiar with the advantages provided by a sheltered harbour and a navigable waterway into the interior. Gum was the greatest attraction of this part of West Africa in this period, and it was for its pursuit that European merchants had found Senegal conveniently situated within easy reach of the escals of the Moors from the North Bank of that River and from Portendick. Indeed, when hopes of establishing a British settlement further north failed, the merchants were prevailed upon to transfer their businesses to the Gambia because of its close proximity to Senegal. They themselves admitted many years later that it was their "expectation of participating in the gum trade of Senegal" that had been their main object in founding the settlement of St. Mary's.[1]

In short, emigration from Senegal to the Gambia was undertaken under sufferance, trading posts in the former settlement being regarded as "the most eligible...on the Coast,"[2] where they had purchased land from the natives, enjoyed the lucrative gum trade and made lasting or temporary unions with the Senoras. As soon as they could wind up their businesses, British merchants, many of them with their Mulatto mistresses and wives (the Señoras) and children, with household property, domestic slaves, many of whom were skilled mechanics and artisans, together with large herds of livestock, set out to build a new trading community on the Island of St. Mary's. A move of this extent involved them in enormous expenditure and loss, but there was no desire on their part to lose the capital and experience already sunk in

1. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol. 1. 13th September, Merchants' letter to Lt.-Gov. Rendall.
2. C.O. 267/80, 31st Oct. 1817, William Forster to Henry Goulburn.

the African trade.[1]

It is, however, doubtful if a total emigration on this scale would ever have been contemplated by the merchants if the Senoras had shown any unwillingness to accompany them to a new settlement. For the economic and social well-being of all Europeans - military and mercantile - in Goree as in St. Louis had for many generations depended upon an energetic Mulatto community, many of them with French, English and Portuguese surnames, which had emerged during the eighteenth century.[2] Not only did the Mulattoes become a binding force in a heterogeneous society, a channel for communication between the European community and the indigenous population (creating a healthy atmosphere for commercial activity), but this element was above all a vital economic force. All observers of the eighteenth century scene in Goree and St. Louis reported that next to the Europeans, the Senoras were the most prosperous, owning substantial houses and wielding considerable power in society as heads of enormous households of dependents.[3] Indeed, the entire labour force in these settlements was virtually controlled by these women; for they were the owners of a large body of Wolofs who were hired out by them as skilled artisans, mechanics, river traders and domestic servants. Besides domestic slaves, valuable animal stock and solid gold jewels secured the economic independence of this small sector of the community.[4]

1. Sir Keith Hancock, "Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs", vol.2. "Problems of Economic Policy 1918-1939",(London,O.U.P.,1942),Part 2,p.158.
2. André Villard, "Histoire du Sénégal", published Dakar, Senegal,1943. p.72.
3. C.O. 267/29, Commission of Enquiry 1810, page 90, Answer No. 12 by Lt.-Colonel Maxwell, 1st January 1811.
4. Ibid.

Nor must their malefolk be left out of consideration, for knowing the country admirably well, they were the promoters of commerce into the interior states.[1] Portuguese mulattoes, particularly, played a very active role as traders in their own right or as middlemen for slavers.[2] Although for the most part the Senoras had hardly received any more formal education than their black mothers and grandmothers, their sons were usually recognised by their European fathers to the extent of being taken away for schooling in Europe.[3] On their return to the West Coast they invariably joined the family business or the Commisariat department. As early as 1778 there had been a Mayor of St. Louis whose main duty was to establish good relations between the Governor and the inhabitants; and this responsible task was reserved for Mulattoes.[4] It was therefore a fairly capable cross-section of the society which emigrated with British merchants from Goree and St. Louis to colonize St. Mary's Island. The military apart, the colonists consisted of men with civic experience, women of affluence with organising ability, and a substantial body of skilled workers. These formed the ingredients of the new colony.

1. "Histoire" by Villard, p.72.
2. Ibid.
3. C.O. 87/6, 1832, vol. 1. 15th December 1832, Lt.-Governor George Rendall to Lord Goderich, Secretary of State.
4. "Histoire", Villard, p.72.

By 1818, the population of Bathurst (named after the Secretary of State for the colonies) on St. Mary's numbered six hundred, including the garrison.[1] The town, however, did not impress the explorer, Major William Gray, who visited it at this time and described it as "nothing more than a number of thatched huts".[2] Within three years the picture had changed and the same visitor was astonished at the rapid development that had taken place. Gray reported that many fine substantial government buildings had been erected, "and the British merchants resident there, have vied with each other in the elegant and convenient arrangement of their dwelling-houses and stores, all of which are built of stone or brick, and roofed with slates or shingles."[3] Five years later, in 1827, Major Rowan the Commissioner of Enquiry into the settlements on the Gambia and the Gold Coast, reported that he found twenty-four storied buildings, apart from Government buildings, among a population of over 1,800 (excluding the troops) of whom thirty were Europeans and one hundred and twenty-two Mulattoes.[4] Large sums had been put into these buildings (skilled labour being short, and stone having to be transported from Dog Island, seven miles away)[5] partly in fulfilment of the agreement

1. C.O. 267/47, 29th March 1818, vol. 1. MacCarthy to Bathurst.
2. "Travels in Western Africa" by Major William Gray & the late Staff-Surgeon Dochard. Published London 1825. p.331.
3. Ibid. pp.365 & 366.
4. C.O. 267/93, 9th June 1827, vol. 3. Report of Commission of Enquiry into the Gambia and Gold Coast by Major James Rowan & Henry Wellington.
5. Ibid.

entered into with Colonel Brereton, but also as a clear indication of their decision to make a permanent settlement on St. Mary's Island.

Those early years may have been difficult, but they were worth-while. The merchants were purposely recreating that pattern of society to which they had been accustomed in the now French-owned Islands. They appreciated the security of the barracks, and the confidence placed in them by a Commandant like Captain Grant who constantly consulted them on matters relating to trade. In a settlement entirely dependent on import duties as a source of revenue, it was inevitable that the element which paid the duties to the officials should thus increase its influence by the very closeness of its ties with them. Officials, soldiers and merchants lived as good neighbours along the harbour, dined in each other's houses when they exchanged views on the state of the settlement, and awaited patiently the mail from Europe. Bathurst for them was an exclusive society, as yet not involved in the politics of the surrounding tribes, dominated by their group.

The interdependence of communities on St. Mary's Island was not immediately obvious to the visitor, for the location of immigrants according to race was striking. The Mulattoes lived in Portuguese Town situated just behind the sea front which was the residential and business centre of the merchants, and the administrative headquarters of the settlement.[1] Melville Town, later called Jollof Town, for the most part inhabited by artisans of the Wolof tribe lay behind this exclusive area of substantial houses and public

1. "Missionary Labours", Moister, p.114.

buildings. Beyond this the rest of the Island was a sandbank in the dry season and a swamp in the rainy season and here under appalling conditions, the poorer inhabitants built their mud huts and thatched roofs; Soldier Town was inhabited by disbanded black soldiers of the Royal African Corps and the West India Regiments in reduced circumstances,[1] and Moka Town, later called Half Die Town, by paupers, composed largely of immigrants from the River states. A Jola community from Combo had also taken up residence in one corner of the Island, which came to be known as Jola Town.[2] According to the Reverend William Moister, a Wesleyan missionary in the settlement in the early 1830s, St. Mary's as originally laid out consisted of a number of separate villages, each intended for a community. The villages were separated by strips of land for purposes of cultivation and pasturage; but as population increased, however, vacant spaces were built over and the villages joined up to form a single town.[3] Bathurst had from the start been regularly laid out by Captain Grant, with wide open streets bearing the names of British Generals at Waterloo.[4]

In a despatch of June 1834 to the Secretary of State, Lt.-Governor Rendall stated that "the principal merchants are Messrs. Forster, Finden,

1. Rowan Report 1827.
2. Ibid. Rowan mistakenly calls them "Jolliffs" who reside in a distant hamlet. "The History of the Gambia" by J.M.Gray, p.319, published 1940 Cambridge University Press.
3. "Missionary Labours", Moister, p.114.
4. Rowan Report 1827; "History" J.M.Gray, p.321.

Chown and Messervy, Charles Grant, Edward Lloyd, Bocock and Goddard."[1] Thomas Joiner, the Mandinka merchant, should not have been omitted from any list of business men of the Gambia, for other sources compared his prosperity with those of his English neighbours. William Moister who knew Joiner well and taught his children at the local Wesleyan school wrote that starting as a small trader with a few dollars, Joiner had gradually amassed considerable wealth so that he purchased a good house, furnished it genteely, "and lived as a first rate gentleman".[2] His house was among the twenty four storied buildings described in Major Rowan's Report; and indeed Joiner had been summoned to give evidence before the Commissioner in 1826 on the state of the Upper River, with which he was "well-acquainted".[3] He owned several vessels which "carried on an extensive trade in the river, as well as with the other settlements on the coast, and even with the West Indies."[4]

Joiner's experience in the West Indies as a slave and then as a freedman enabled him to make contacts with traders there which proved valuable when he returned to West Africa and set up a small business in Goree before 1810. His greatest handicap was his very limited education. There was no question about his intelligence, but before he was captured and sold as a slave, he

1. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol. 1. June, Rendall to Lord Stanley.
2. "Missionary Labours", p.176.
3. Rowan Report, 1827.
4. "Missionary Labours", p.176.

had wandered through the villages of the Gambia earning a living as a minstrel.[1] He was not, however, illiterate for his signature appeared on every Merchants' Memorial of the 'twenties and 'thirties; nor was he incapable as an entrepreneur of drawing up accounts. One such statement showed "articles furnished by direction of His Excellency the Lt.-Governor on the occasion of the Coronation of the king of Barra, and as presents to kings, chiefs, headmen and messengers ... on the River Gambia between 1st January and 31st March 1834" - amounting to a total of £82.6.6d.[2] There was no doubt that he was recognised by the Administration as a leading merchant from whom valuable advice on 'native affairs' could be sought. He ranked as one of the biggest shipowners in the settlement; his brigantine, the "General Turner" was the largest vessel in the trade of the Upper River in 1834 - weighing seventy-six tons.[3] The nearest to it was the "Alexander Grant" owned by Chown and Messervy - a schooner weighing sixty tons.[4] In short, Joiner's business was as broad-based as any in St. Mary's, and for that reason he was a true symbol of successful commercial enterprise in the Gambia settlement.

If Joiner was perhaps the most interesting of the merchants there, William C. Forster was the most influential among them. Born in county

1. "Missionary Labours", Moister, p.176.
2. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol. 1. 12th June, Rendall to R.W.Hay; Secretariat Archives, Gambia, 31st March 1834, Joiner to Rendall.
3. Ibid. 28th June, Merchants' Petition to Lord Stanley.
4. Ibid.

Durham, at the age of twenty-four he was already representing the reputable firm of Forster and Smith of Bishopsgate, London, a firm whose trading interests extended from Portendick to the Gold Coast.[1] Like others, Forster had been engaged in trade in Goree before he transferred to St. Mary's in 1817.[2] For many years, his was the leading business house in Bathurst; and on that depended William Forster's personal influence among the mercantile community there. Able to draw upon fairly substantial capital (his brother Matthew Forster appears to have started the business in 8, New City Chambers which grew into the partnership with Smith),[3] he enjoyed that security and independence required for leadership.

Forster's home in No. 2 Wellington Street, Bathurst, became the debating house of the commercial community, where problems of trade were discussed, memorials framed and signed, and a line of action decided upon. It was reasonable that the host became the spokesman of this dynamic group in the growing settlement. In 1817, the year in which he came to St. Mary's, he led the agitation against the French post at Albreda, "formerly only a comptoir", but now, as the merchants complained, used an entrepôt by the French to which many foreign vessels resorted with cheap goods which glutted

1. C.O. 267/69, 1825, vol. 5. 18th January, Matthew Forster to Lord Bathurst.
2. Rowan Report 1827, William Forster to Rowan, June 24th 1826.
3. The Guildhall Library, London, Post Office London Directory (Commercial), 1820.

the River market.[1] In transmitting the Memorial to Lord Bathurst, Forster urged that no time should be lost in demonstrating British claims to the exclusive possession of the Gambia River. Alternatively, he proposed that the British too might hoist their flag in the vicinity of St. Louis in retaliation.[2]

Merchants of St. Mary's were practical men of business who valued their contact with Matthew Forster in the City of London, for he could uphold their commercial interests in the Metropolis, and, if necessary, bring pressure to bear on the Colonial Office. In 1817, for instance, when Matthew wrote to Lord Bathurst to ask for an interview for his brother, William, he used the occasion to make a statement on the newly founded settlement of St. Mary's Island, based on information received at first hand. He echoed current optimism "that St. Mary's is calculated, with due encouragement, to become the first settlement on the Coast," especially as it was suppressing the slave trade so effectively. Yet all was not well: illegitimate trade had been revived since the French took back Goree and Senegal and there was concern that this might interrupt the pursuit of legitimate trade on the banks of the Gambia. Besides, there were further obstacles "to the civilization and trade of that country." Currency was extremely short within the settlement, and no Bills or promissory notes could be procured there.[3] Added to these problems,

1. C.O. 267/80, 31st October 1817, William Forster to Henry Goulburn; see chapter III of Thesis.
2. Ibid.
3. C.O. 267/46, 1817, vol. 2. 30th September, Matthew Forster to Lord Bathurst.

the merchants resented what they considered were prohibitive duties imposed on African produce entering England since it reduced their profits considerably These then were some of the issues which the young Gambia merchant was expected to discuss with the Secretary of State during his 'leave' in London in the summer of 1817.

The Forster and Smith business in West Africa was sufficiently large to require the employment of European agents like Richard Lloyd resident agent in their factory in the Casamance[2] till he was transferred to MacCarthy Island in the River Gambia. Thomas Brown, destined to become one of the outstanding merchants in St. Mary's, first came to the colony in 1829 as mercantile clerk to this firm; but he combined this for a time with another clerical job in the service of the Officer administering the Government at a salary of five shillings a day.[3] The firm also employed a considerable body of Mulatto sub-agents and African traders, to handle its export commodities - gum from Portendick, rice and wax from the Casamance and Nunez Rivers, and gold, wax, hides and ivory from the Gambia. It was certainly a profitable concern which was to keep William Forster in St. Mary's till his death in April 1849 at the age of fifty-six.[4]

1. C.O. 267/46, 1817, vol. 2. 30th Sept., M. Forster to Lord Bathurst.
2. C.O. 267/173, 26th August 1841, Part 3 of Dr. Madden's Report on The Settlements of Western Africa. Section on "The Slave Trading Factories".
3. C.O. 87/2, 17th May 1829, W.Hutton, Colonial Secretary, to R.W.Hay.
4. Memorial Tablet in St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral Church, Bathurst, Gambia.

Among the other leading merchants, Charles Grant was a close relative of Captain Alexander Grant, the first Commandant of the Gambia settlement. He had previously spent four months in Sierra Leone in Government service before he left for Bathurst in 1819.[1] Until his retirement to Scotland in the 'forties, he played a significant role as a strong supporter of the Wesleyan mission. He was described by Moister as "the Missionary's friend", a Christian gentleman whose counsel and kindness (he kept open house to all missionaries) in times of grave difficulties was a great comfort to them.[2] Many a pleasant evening was spent with him "in religious and general conversation ..."[3] It was therefore not surprising that as a contractor, Grant was to be employed by the mission to erect a new chapel in Dobson Street in 1834.[4]

Within the ranks of the mercantile community were also found ex-Naval and Army Officers, who proved a great service to the settlement as officers in the Militia. Richard Lloyd of the Royal York Rangers had been Commandant of Goree from 1804 to 1808, and had risen to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.[5]

1. Rowan Report 1827, C.Grant's letter to Rowan, 30th June 1826.
2. "Missionary Labours", Moister, p.125.
3. Ibid. p.210.
4. "A Brief History of the Wesleyan Missions on the Western Coast of Africa" by the Rev. William Fox, p.370, published London 1851.
5. C.O. 267/32, 8th January 1810, Richard Lloyd to Cecil Jenkinson.

His relative (probably a brother) Edward Lloyd had been a Captain in the Royal African Corps stationed at Goree since 1805, "till he was obliged to quit, in consequence of various Acts of disgraceful conduct."[1] In 1812, this Lloyd was writing to Zachary Macaulay, late Secretary of the African Institution against alleged tyrannical and immoral acts of Major Chisholm, the then Commandant of Goree, where Lloyd had continued to reside till he moved to St. Mary's.[2] The Lloyd 'influence' was something to be reckoned with in the Gambia of the 'forties; they had made partnerships with wealthy Senoras in Goree and become the heads of large families of children, nephews and nieces. Their descendants were important landowners in the Gambia; and late in the century, two female descendants continued to enjoy the eight hundre acres of Kotu estate in Combo.[3] Of Richard Lloyd, Lt.-Commander Berwick wrote to Lt.-Governor Rendall at the siege of Barra in 1831: "I had in Lt.-Colonel Lloyd, Bathurst Militia, who was many years an officer of the line, and who on this occasion took the command of the left wing ..." an able soldier.

Edward Bocock had started a business in Goree; he became a typical St. Mary's merchant owning trading vessels, supplying materials for making new sluice gates to the Colonial Government, signing memorials and petitions with his group. Nathaniel Waterman, Charles Johnston, John Wynne had arrived in

1. C.O. 267/34, 29th July 1812, H. Torrens to Robert Peel.
2. C.O. 267/34, January 1812, Edward Lloyd to Zachary Macaulay.
3. Gambia Executive Council Minutes, December 1892.

Goree between 1806 and 1811 and opened businesses or were employed in Government service. The first Thomas Chown too had been a foundation member of St. Mary's, having arrived on the Coast in 1811.[1] He had been a Captain in the navy, and now, in partnership with Messervy, owned several vessels for the River trade. At Jillifrey they had built a house, "the only stone house here; ... situated between the town and the river ..." and surrounded by flowers and fruit trees.[2] Indeed, Chown was to be one of the most enterprisin merchants in the settlement; he launched capital into the business, and very early built factories for his traders in different parts of the River.[3] When he died in 1845, he left a flourishing concern to his son, by name Thomas Chown also. The Chowns became an institution in St. Mary's - three generations successfully maintained the family business till the latter part of the nineteenth century.

It was, however, W.H. Goddard who seemed to have 'succeeded' William Forster by the mid-nineteenth century. He had married a Senora of Goree, and had some influence with successive Administrators. He was the merchant they visited and dined with or with whom they enjoyed a picnic into Combo.[4] He was an entrepreneur of high standing with trading establishments along the River as Thomas Chown, and a fleet of River craft for the pursuit of trade. Only a very few merchants were entrepreneurs, the majority began as Agents

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol. 1. 9th April, Thomas Chown to Earl Granville.
2. "A Brief History", Fox, p.394.
3. C.O. 267/61, 1824, vol. 2. 23rd August 1824, Captain G.W.Courtenay to Lt.-Colonel Alexander Grant.
4. "Missionary Labours", p.209.

for private merchants of London interested in the African trade. John James Staples Finden, "one of our principal merchants connected with Bristol" and "the son of the celebrated engraver of the same name in London,"[1] was engaged in the gum trade at Portendick in the 1830s as agent for a Mr. Robert Harrison of London.[2] His wealthy Senora wife had brought over to the Gambia many heads of livestock; and they had built themselves a beautiful country residence in Jeshwang in Combo.[3] Though he owned cutters for the River trade, Finden was not really a shipowner. For the pursuit of the coastal trade he was therefore obliged to employ other vessels; in 1834, for example, he employed Captain James Eunson, Master of a cutter "Industry" for the season,[4] and despatched his clerk, John Hughes, the mulatto son of Thomas Hughes a British merchant who had lived in Goree, as supercargo to trade for gum in Portendick.[5] Similarly, Nathaniel Isaacs did not trade to Portendick himself but sent his Mulatto clerk, Mr. Pincent, as supercargo of the brigantine "Matchless" of the port of London.[6] The gum trade was too

1. Ibid.
2. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol. 1. 30th June, G.Rendall to Lord Stanley:- "The Mercantile Houses engaged are Messrs.Forster & Smith, Messrs.Harrison & Finden, & Messieurs Redman & Co. ...."
3. C.O. 87/73, 1862, 24th May, Governor George d'Arcy to the Duke of Newcastle.
4. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol. 1. 30th August, G.Rendall to R.W.Hay, - see Enclosures.
5. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol. 1. 30th August, Rendall to R.W.Hay, - see Enclosures.
6. Ibid.

hazardous and highly specialised for the average European merchant in St. Mary's, for it demanded a knowledge of French and an acquaintance with the tactics of the Goree Authorities and the temperament of the Moors.

Most of the trade of the Gambia was in gum, wax, gold, ivory, hides and rice. The merchants supplied wax and tallow chandlers, gold refiners, ivory turners and others in London. Rice from the Casamance was exported in husk and milled in newly erected mills hard by the Thames and owned by Forster and Smith. Trade was sufficiently encouraging in the early years of the settlement of St. Mary's to induce the merchants to pool capital for bigger ventures. The trade in gum had always ranked high with them, and they had in 1821 opened a trade with the Trarza Moors at Portendick.[1] In the Gambia itself there was expansion, and colonists from St. Mary's began to move into the interior to establish other settlements.

It was on the initiative of Sir Charles MacCarthy, the Governor of the West African settlements that the first dependency of St. Mary's was founded on Lemain Island in the Middle River. Always anxious "to cultivate a more intimate acquaintance with the natives"... in order to promote a "greater extension of a free and honourable commerce", he instructed Capt. Grant, the Commandant at St. Mary's, to form a settlement in the Upper River,[2] largely

1. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol. 1. 13th Sept., Merchants' letter to Lt.-Governor Rendall.
2. C.O. 267/66, 1825, vol. 2. 12th May 1823, A. Grant to MacCarthy.

to monopolise the trade of the interior. With a small band of colonists composed of one sergeant, twelve privates of the 2nd West India Regiment, a number of Government labourers and some of Thomas Joiner's men, twelve Liberated African men [1] who had volunteered their services, and, accompanied by C. Grant & T. Joiner, Grant set out on the 12th of March 1823 on board of a vessel belonging to Joiner, to found another settlement. Disappointed with the terrain around the Barracunda Falls (the highest navigable point in the River), and having been made a generous offer of the Island of Gingam-Burry, otherwise called Lemain, by the proprietor the king of Catabar on his way up River, Grant returned to take possession in the name of the king of England on the 14th April 1823.[2] A mud fort was built and named after King George, guns were mounted and the British flag hoisted. Thus the first outpost of St. Mary's was founded (James Island having been abandoned) on another island about one hundred and seventy six miles up the River from headquarters. In honour of the promoter, it was renamed MacCarthy Island. As the practice was, an annual stipend of £10 was offered to the king of Catabar.[3]

Merchants who had entered the River trade found MacCarthy Island a useful depot for their goods. Many of them began to build storehouses around Fort George, and they were joined by discharged soldiers who put up modest huts and

1. Ibid.
2. C.O. 267/66, 1825, vol. 2. 12th May 1823, A.Grant to MacCarthy.
3. C.O. 87/105, 1873, vol. 2. August 1873, C.H.Kortright to Lord Kimberley; See also Chapter III of Thesis.

began to cultivate the land. About a mile away, a native town began to increase its population with persons "who had fled thither for protection from the raging war in the neighbouring country."[1] The Wesleyan mission had been encouraged by the Administration to start work on the Island, and towards this end had been granted extensive land.[2] In general then, the pattern of society on MacCarthy Island was not unlike that of St. Mary's; and there too final authority lay with the military. In this case, the management of its affairs was left in the hands of an African sergeant of the 2nd West India Regiment, one Buchanan by name.[3] On a visit there three years after its foundation, Kenneth Macaulay,acting Governor of Sierra Leone,found "the discharged men and others settled there in a very comfortable, decent state, both in their houses and persons, complaining of nothing but a want of wives ..."[4] He reported that many more merchants and inhabitants of Bathurst had requested lots of land; and he strongly recommended the new settlement ideally suited for the location of a considerable number of Liberated Africans.[5]

1. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.2. 29th June, Kenneth Macaulay to Lord Bathurst.
2. C.O. 267/66, 1825, vol.2. 12th May 1823, A.Grant to MacCarthy.
3. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.2. 29th June, Macaulay to Bathurst.
4. Ibid.
5. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.2. June 29th, Macaulay to Bathurst.

It was also in keeping with MacCarthy's instructions to Commandants at St. Mary's to attend to the interests of the merchants by signing treaties of friendship with chiefs whose states lay adjacent to the British settlements that the Ceded Mile on the Barra Coast was acquired for Britain by Kenneth Macaulay in 1826. Relations between the king of Barra and the merchants had been strained since the foundation of Bathurst, because Captain Grant's agreement of 1816 with the king had recognised the king's right to continue to exact custom from all trading vessels which entered the River with cargo. MacCarthy had impressed on the merchants the need to fulfil engagements made with the natives "as the only means of establishing mutual confidence so essential to form the basis of honourable commerce". In answer to the merchants' complaints of the constant delay of their vessels at Jillifrey by the king's Alcaide who collected the duties, it was proposed by the Government that a flat rate of £5 per annum should be levied on the owners of craft trading up River. This fee was to be paid to the Custom House Officer who would in turn pay about £130 per annum in quarterly instalments to the king. This was only accepted in Barra after some resistance. When, however, Governor MacCarthy visited St. Mary's in 1823, the merchants pleaded hardship from the duty imposed on their vessels. MacCarthy therefore agreed that "the quarterly customs paid to the king of Barra should be charged to the Colonial Fund".[1] Following which, Capt. Grant was sent on a mission to the king to ask for permission to erect a Martello Tower on Barra Point, a

1. C.O. 267/66, 1825, vol.2. 25th November, Alexander Grant to R.W.Hay.

proposal that was received very kindly, for the king observed that it would provide him with protection.[1]

Barra, however, remained a thorn in the flesh of St. Mary's from which it was separated by only about three miles of waterway. In 1826 Macaulay found the inhabitants of Bathurst "in a state of considerable alarm and doubt as to the conduct likely to be observed by the king ... in case his differences with the Colonial Government were not finally arranged."[2] Nor were their fears allayed by the activities of the French in Albreda which was situated in Barra kingdom. Governor Roger of Senegal had only left the River two days before Macaulay's arrival; it was believed that his mission had been to the king of Barra from whom he desired a cession of land.[3] Macaulay, therefore, acted promptly by signing a treaty with the newly elected king, Burungai Sonko, on the 15th June 1826 at Jillifrey.[4] By it, the king ceded to Britain "for ever the full, entire and unlimited right, title, sovereignty, and possession of the River Gambia with all the branches, creeks, inlets and waters of the same ...." In return for relinquishing all customs and duties, the king accepted a yearly stipend of 400 dollars or £86.13.4d. In conclusion, a cession of territory was made, extending from Bunyadu Creek on the west to

1. C.O. 267/58, 1823, vol.1. 7th July, A.Grant to MacCarthy.
2. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.2. 28th June, K.Macaulay to Lord Bathurst.
3. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.2. 28th June, Kenneth Macaulay to Lord Bathurst.
4. Ibid. - Enclosure.

Jokadu Creek on the east for one geographical mile inland on the north bank of the River.[1] A fort was erected here, too, mounted with guns and named fort Bullen after Commodore Bullen who had assisted in its construction. The Mile already contained five towns inhabited by the king of Barra's subjects who had adopted Islam and withdrawn from the inland towns in protest against the lax morals of society.[2] Although this region never attracted settlers from St. Mary's as MacCarthy Island or later British Combo, did, it became a place for locating Liberated Africans, and refugees from the wars of the mid nineteenth century.

The welfare of military and civilian officers was equally the concern of MacCarthy; and since they could not always escape to Europe during the annual rainy season when Coast fever made havoc of the European population, a convalescent station had to be found along the Coast. In 1821, MacCarthy had purchased a piece of land from the king of Combo and erected a House for officers on a cliff overlooking the Atlantic, in a most salubrious climate.[3] Clifton, as it came to be called, was a quarter of a mile from the native town of Baccow, and eight miles from Bathurst which could be reached by water in an hour, or by walking in two hours (the narrow creek being crossed by ferry).[4] In 1836 Lieut. Governor Rendall recommended the situation for a Liberated African fishing village which would serve the Bathurst market;[5] but

1. Ibid.
2. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 28th September, Administrator George d'Arcy to Governor Sam Blackall; see also Chapter VIII of Thesis.
3. C.O. 87/14, 15th July 1836, vol.1. G.Rendall to Lord Glenelg.
4. C.O. 87/14, 15th July 1836, vol.1. Rendall to Glenelg.
5. Ibid.

it was not till the 'fifties that the Government made a serious effort to colonise Combo. Before this, land had been purchased from private individuals there. In 1850, however, a strip of land along the coast was guaranteed to the British by the king for building purposes.[1] It became the fashion for senior officials and prominent merchants to build handsome country houses in that area; Judge Mantell's Farm was estimated at a cost of no less than £2000.[2] The Senoras, however, had long anticipated this expansion into Combo and had leased extensive areas of land directly from the local chiefs and erected their own modest country houses.[3] The communities on St. Mary's Island had not only settled comfortably in their new environment but had become outwardlooking within a relatively short time of building a new settlement.

St. Mary's was obviously growing into a trading centre with an increasing civilian population when the Authorities in England had only made provision for a military post under the command of an Officer of the army. Governor MacCarthy was very early convinced of the need for a civil establishment, and to this end he created a Settlement Court and Court of Requests when he visited St. Mary's in 1818, and to the Commandant and the Courts he delegated

1. C.O. 87/52, 4th June 1852, vol.1. Governor R.G.MacDonnell to Earl Grey.
2. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 20th July, d'Arcy to Edward Cardwell.
3. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2.23rd June, d'Arcy to Cardwell.

legislative, executive and judicial powers which had hitherto been concentrated in the hands of the Governor and Council of Sierra Leone.[1] Merchants in Bathurst were given full representation on these bodies in order to reduce military control, for even when it was benevolent it tended to be autocratic, as no rudimentary elements of a municipality as yet existed there. Merchants who had lived in Goree and Senegal were familiar with a form of government where executive authority was vested in the Commandant, always a soldier under instruction from the Governor of Sierra Leone, himself a military man. The civilian population in general, however, had provided a Secretary, a Harbour Master, and above all a Mayor, who was appointed for his integrity and experience; the only civil officer in Goree was the Mayor.[2] Although British merchants had seemed fairly well satisfied with the Administration there (probably because they were fully absorbed in the gum trade, and their numbers were smaller), as Englishmen they could surely not have imagined it to be a permanent arrangement. Transfer to St. Mary's provided them with an opportunity to oppose arbitrary government.

In theory, after the disintegration of the province of Sene-Gambia in 1783, the Crown revested the Gambia in the Committee of the Company of Merchants under whose control it remained on paper till the dissolution of the

1. C.O. 267/47, 1818, vol.1. 14th April, Governor MacCarthy to Commandant William Appleton.
2. C.O. 267/29, 11th January 1811, Answer No. 45 to Dawes Commission of Enquiry, by Lt.-Col. Maxwell.

Company in 1821.[1] In practice, it was left to the Governor of Sierra Leone to administer the Gambia. MacCarthy was recognised for his "unwearied exertions to improve the trade and civilization of that part of Africa under his authority",[2] but there was growing dissatisfaction among the mercantile community with continued dependence upon another Government. The first open criticism came not directly from the local merchants themselves, but from their contacts in London, who were better placed to exert influence on the British Government. It was Ralph Smith, partner of Matthew Forster, who, in a letter to Earl Bathurst pointed to the disadvantages of dependence which in the case of St. Mary's hindered "that progress in trade to which it is by its situation and natural resources calculated to attain."[3] In spite of growing demands for a separate government, by Charter of 1821, the Gambia was legally constituted a dependency of Sierra Leone (as was the Gold Coast colony); and in the following year a Court of Common Pleas was established under a Judge and two Assistants, appeal lying to with the Governor and Council of Sierra Leone.[4] Under the new arrangement, legislative authority was withdrawn from the Commandant and merchants of St. Mary's, the Settlement Court being virtually abolished. It was in the administration of justice,

1. E.C.Martin, "West African Settlements" (London 1927), p.102.
2. C.O. 267/50, 1819, vol.2. 8th April, Ralph Smith to Lord Bathurst.
3. C.O. 267/50, 1819, vol.2. 8th April, Ralph Smith to Lord Bathurst.
4. C.O. 267/93, Rowan Commission of Enquiry 1827.

however, that the voluntary services of the merchants was most needed. They were called upon to do public service as sheriffs, magistrates, coroners, jurors and in similar posts.

The Court of Common Pleas was a practical arrangement and a fairly effective instrument of Law, though Chief Justice Rendall of Sierra Leone made some serious criticisms of the legal machinery when he visited the Gambia in 1825. He found that the gravest difficulties arose from the inexperience of the magistrates with "the most common forms and proceedings" of the law.[1] According to Rendall, not one person in St. Mary's was acquainted with the duties of Sheriff either. The result was inefficiency and indeed injustice, so that local prejudice against unqualified judges became evident. A situation then arose where "their decisions against each other were received with dissatisfaction and led to quarrels and appeals to the Courts" in Sierra Leone.[2] The succession of resignations on the part of the judges almost brought the legal machinery to a standstill. As Governor Charles Turner put it, they "begged to be relieved from situations which interfered with their business and for which they were not fit ...."[3]

The picture was not entirely a gloomy one, for as Magistrates, Merchants were instrumental in the condemnation of slavers; the "Luiza", for example,

1. C.O. 267/65, 1825, vol.1. 1st December 1824, George Rendall's Report to Governor D.M. Hamilton.
2. C.O. 267/66, 1825, vol.2. 8th July, Governor Charles Turner to Bathurst.
3. C.O. 267/66, 1825, vol.2. 8th July, Charles Turner to Bathurst.

carrying slaves within the port of Bathurst was seized by John Bland, the Collector of Customs, in 1830. The case against one John Burdett, a native merchant of Senegal, contractor for the hire of the schooner whose Master was Lorenso Correio, was held "before Edward Lloyd esq. Chief Judge, William Forster, Charles Johnstone, and Charles Grant esquires, Assistant Judges of the Court of Common Pleas ——." Judgment was given on Sept. 30th 1830, by which the schooner,her boats, guns —— wares and slaves were confiscated to the use of His Majesty, his heirs and successors.[1] The case had been quite efficiently executed. Merchants also gave service as jurymen, sitting for trial of minor cases of felony with the Commandant. Among them sat Thomas Joiner, the African merchant, and prominent persons from the Mulatto community.[2] Thus a cross-section of the mercantile community had become an integral part of the Colonial Government, especially in its campaign against slave-dealers. It was an administrative machinery largely run by amateurs, and though it sometimes lacked efficiency, it served a purpose in the early years of the settlement, and welded a heterogeneous society to its rulers in a healthy partnership.

In the organisation of trade, in the general welfare of the settlement, even to the planning of its defences, the local government looked for advice and indeed for manpower from the mercantile body. In 1826, for instance,

1. C.O. 87/5, 1831, vol.1. 30th June, Lt.-Governor Rendall to Lord Goderich.
2. Rowan Commission of Enquiry 1827.

some of the merchants had been incorporated into two Boards[1] - the Board for Internal commerce dealing with such matters as the drainage of the Island, land-tenure, port regulations, and other domestic issues, while the Board for External Commerce was primarily devoted to the affairs of trade. One record of the former Board has survived and relates to its third meeting held on the 29th August 1827 under the presidency of John Wynne, with John Pellegrin, a Mulatto, acting as secretary, and Goddard, Bocock and Charles Grant as members. Discussion was devoted to practical problems - the neglect of the sluices, the hardship caused to poorer inhabitants by Governor Neil Campbell's confiscation of their town lots.[2] Through the organ of the Board for External commerce, composed of other influential business men - Edward Lloyd being President - the mercantile community fought out the case against French competition in the River Trade and submitted far-reaching resolutions for the consideration of the Governor of Sierra Leone.[3] Though the Boards remained ineffectual, since their reports never went beyond the Administrator's office, yet they provided for their members the experience of serious corporate thinking on matters relating to a growing municipality.

A slightly less ineffective body was perhaps the Agricultural Society "established here, for the encouragement of the growth of such articles as

1. C.O. 267/73, 1826, vol.3. 3rd Sept., Governor Neil Campbell to Lord Bathurst.
2. C.O. 87/1, 1828, Correspondence, 6th May, Major Alexander Findlay to R.W. Hay.
3. C.O. 267/83, 1827, vol.3. Resolutions of the Board of Commerce held on the 1st August 1827.

may be valuable to the Mother Country, and its first act has been to raise a subscription to support an experimental Plantation of Hemp." In February 1831, the subscription list stood at £200, with land and labour guaranteed by the Lt.-Governor;[1] there was no time wasted in starting an experimental farm in Baccow with Liberated Africans provided by the Government.[2] Indeed, Finden, one of the most active promoters of the venture, went on leave that rainy season with samples of African hemp with a view to convincing Colonial Office of the discovery of a new export commodity.[3] The Secretary of State responded by cautioning Rendall against entering into rash speculations and engagements.[4] Like other ventures to broaden the Gambia economy in those early years, high hopes entertained about a hemp trade never materialised. It was not for lack of enthusiasm or enterprise on the part of the merchants that business moved slowly and sometimes seemed almost to come to a standstill.

As St. Mary's grew in population and in importance, (in 1825 the once-uninhabited Island contained about 2,500 persons) and began to widen its frontiers, so did friction with the natives of neighbouring states ensue, involving the Colonial Government with their rulers. It was fortunate that there was available in the settlement a nucleus of seasoned intermediaries

1. C.O. 87/5, 1831, vol.1.10th February, Rendall to R.W. Hay.
2. C.O. 87/5, 1831, vol.1. 1st November, Rendall to Hay.
3. Ibid. 26th May 1831, J.J.S. Finden to R.W. Hay.
4. Ibid. 1st November 1831, Rendall to Lord Goderich.

who had frequently been called to the service of the Governors of Senegal in their disputes with native chiefs in that settlement. This nucleus was drawn from the Mulatto community for the most part, although it received the assistance of a few Africans like Joiner.

Access to such rulers either for peaceful or hostile purposes depended on the cooperation of those merchants who owned vessels which could be placed at the disposal of the Lt.-Governor. The vessels of Chown and Bocock were put under government service in 1831, and Charles Grant himself accompanied Rendall's party to explore Vintain River, a tributary of the Gambia which watered an extensive area on the south bank, and was believed to join the River Casamance in the territory to the south of it.[1] It was in fact a commercial expedition which it was hoped would secure the unadulterated wax of the Jolas of Vintain and Casamance for the Bathurst market. In the same year, Bocock's Lighter was engaged by Captain Belcher of His Majesty's survey ship the "Etna" to carry stones and lime to Bird Island for the erection of a beacon there. The vessel was lost at sea during operations and the Colonial Government was obliged to compensate the owner with £60.[2] Business houses in London which participated in the African trade - Messrs. Forster and Smith and others - made it a point to inform the Colonial Office before the departure of their Vessels for West Africa, the reason being that in those days of poor communications it was an advantage to send despatches by any available vessel.[3]

1. C.O. 87/5, 1831, vol.1. 30th June No. 35, Rendall to Hay.
2. C.O. 87/5, 1831, vol.1. 30th June No. 34, Rendall to Hay.
3. C.O. 87/5, 1831, vol.1. 9th May, Messrs. Forster & Smith to R.W.Hay.

While only a handful of established merchants in Bathurst enjoyed the facilities of overseas communication by their own sailing ships, a growing number owned river craft - mostly schooners of five to sixty tons. Dr. Madden on a Commission of Enquiry to the settlement in 1841 found forty such vessels belonging to the merchants, most of them built by their Wolof mechanics and manned by Portuguese Mulattoes.[1] Not only did they carry cargo along the River, but they were engaged in the coastal trade, carrying blue and white bafts, crimson cloth and tobacco to the Moors at Potendick, or bringing rice from the Casamance. They were no less passenger boats, for there were always merchants and missionaries seeking a rest cure in the Cape Verde Islands and Madeira, and others on business to Bissao and Sierra Leone. Mr. Finden, Mr. Goddard and others with Mulatto wives made regular social visits to Goree where relatives and friends had been left behind in 1816. In fact, there was a ceaseless traffic of passengers between the ports of Bathurst and Goree in the first half of the nineteenth century. Senoras, accompanied by a retinue of Wolof domestics were only rivalled by an equally substantial body of Liberated Africans travelling southwards to Sierra Leone.[2]

There was nothing lethargic about the British merchants on St. Mary's; they formed a most versatile group. Through their own efforts (exemplified in their payment of taxes for the running of a civil government), and with great encouragement from the first Governor of the West African settlements -

1. C.O. 267/173, 26th August 1841, Part 3 of Commission of Enquiry on the Settlements on the Western Coast of Africa, by Dr. Madden. See Sections on Imports & Exports, & Bathurst.
2. Gambia Archives, Attorney General's Office, Register of Liberated Africans. 1830s & '40s.

Charles MacCarthy - they gradually changed a small military post into a thriving commercial settlement, entirely devoted to fostering legitimate trade. It was a homogeneous group, a little exclusive, partly because it had the ear of the Administration, but nevertheless firmly bound to the other communities on the Island for the same reasons that had obtained in Goree and Senegal. Dependence on Mulatto sub-agents (not to mention the Senoras) and Wolof artisans and mechanics for the better conduct of commerce, tended to break down barriers between racial groups in St. Mary's. In any event, there was consanguinity between European and Mulatto, and between Mulatto and Negro.

Mulattoes were an appendage to the White community, but in spite of that they played a prominent role in the Gambia settlement, as a recognisable entity. Between 1816 and 1826 when Major Rowan visited the settlement, the tightly knit group of Mulattoes who had accompanied the merchants from Goree and St. Louis had been growing because of prospects of higher wages in a variety of jobs. The general complaint of the merchants was of the extreme shortage of labour in St. Mary's, and of their dependence on Goree for sailors and artisans. Better jobs were open to the Mulatto who was bilingual in French and English; the trade to Portendick provided a specialised field which he monopolised. Many a Mulatto youth also earned a living as a mercantile clerk in Bathurst.

Their women continued to enjoy unlimited influence in the settlement; the less privileged among them sold local foodstuffs in the public market, but a fair number composed the elite of Bathurst throughout the century, and were invariably a centre of attraction to visitors to the Island. Mrs. Bowdich who visited St. Mary's in 1823 called them "handsome ... generally tall and gracefully formed ... [and] very elegant ..." Although they pretended to approach nearer to European manners and customs than those of other parts of Africa, Mrs. Bowdich identified them with the Wolofs in their religious and superstitious ceremonies. Nor was their mode of dress unlike that of other natives; apart from footwear, a status symbol, the Senoras also wore Pagnes and covered their heads with headkerchiefs. Generations of intimate contact with Europeans, however, had given them a certain sophistication which Mrs. Bowdich disapproved of and called "insolent manners." She particularly disliked the way they expected others "to turn out of the path for their accommodation" when they were out walking, or their constant intrusions at her home without invitation. Even the Fantee Mulattoes at Cape Coast had been found less insolent![1] It was a brief, but penetrating, study of a nucleus of coloured ladies without inferiority complex, an indication of the healthy racial attitudes which existed between Whites and Mulattoes in St. Mary's as in Goree and St. Louis.

While it may have been true that many of them were very idle, having

1. T.E. Bowdich: "Excursion in Madeira & Porto Santo ... while on his 3rd voyage to Africa." Added to by Mrs. Bowdich. (London, 1825). pp.207-209.

"no manufactures" like the surrounding natives,[1] so that their privileged status depended largely on their ability to keep their White Lovers and on the acquiescence of their black dependents in an inferior role, nevertheless, this group also produced its own entrepreneurs in the River Trade. Madam Eliza Tigh, a Mulatto lady of great influence, who had given her name to Tighcunda in the River, had much impressed Gray and Dochard in 1818 with her business acumen. She traded in gold, wax and ivory, which "she purchased in exchange for firearms, powder, India goods, coral, beads, iron, tobacco, rum, cutlery."[2] There were others like her too; some carried on the family business in the factories up River when their 'husbands' went home to England on leave, or retired from the settlement. Mrs. Riley, for instance, kept the factory at Doma-sang-sang going when John Riley, a man of colour, was away (the Rileys also did business in other parts of the River including Yanemaroo).[3] These business women were among the owners of river craft, without which trade in the Gambia was impossible.

The River had in fact been inhabited by hamlets of Mulattoes from the days of the Portuguese explorers, many of whom moved to St. Mary's after its foundation in 1816. The very designation of one district of the new town pointed to the presence of a substantial body of Portuguese Mulattoes among its inhabitants. This group filled out its ranks in the course of the century, not only with new arrivals from Goree and Senegal but also from the

1. Bowdich, "Excursion", p.207.
2. Gray & Dochard, "Travels", p.51.
3. Moister, "Missionary Labours", pp.170 & 184.

Cape Verde Islands and Bissao, immigrants who hoped to engage in the carrying trade as captains of vessels, or to supply the demand for skilled mechanics, especially painters. Robert Aynsley was a Mulatto, and a native of the River states, for he was descended from the elder Robert Aynsley - an English trader at Pisania (Karantaba) in the Upper River who had assisted Mungo Park and other explorers into the interior.[1] It was the younger Aynsley who had sold Thomas Joiner as a slave to the captain of an American vessel; but once the slave trade was effectively abolished in the River, his business seemed to have declined to the extent that Joiner, who had by then secured his freedom, was in more comfortable circumstances and owned a better house in St. Mary's.[2] It may well be that Aynsley had lost much of his property before he moved to St. Mary's in 1817, for transfer had been dictated by the ravages suffered from raiding parties from the interior. He continued to participate in the old trade, and in 1834 his schooner "Reform" - a vessel of thirty tons - was one of seven vessels trading in the River.[3]

Jean (later known as John) Pellegrin was to the Mulatto community what William Forster was to the British community; "the most respectable of our coloured inhabitants," as Lt.-Governor Rendall described him in a despatch in 1830. By this date, through trade contacts, he had so far gained the respect of the indigenous tribes, that he was delegated official messenger and intermediary to the king of Saloum who had committed outrages on the persons

1. Gray & Dochard, "Travels" p.70; Rev. John Morgan, "Reminiscences of the founding of a Christian Mission in the Gambia", (London 1864) p.12.
2. Moister, "Missionary Labours", p.176.
3. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 28th June, Merchants' Petition to Lord Stanley.

and properties belonging to some merchants. "I made choice of Ensign Tearnon, then acting Colonial Secretary, and Mr. Pellegrin —— who is perfectly acquainted with the native palavers", wrote Rendall. "I am happy to say that these Gentlemen were perfectly successful in their endeavours ——."[1] This was not the only occasion when Pellegrin was selected by the local government for public service: He had been secretary of the defunct Board of Internal Commerce whose reports were intended to provide the Governor at Sierra Leone with informed opinion on progress in the settlement. In February 1831, with Richard Lloyd, he had been instructed to examine a quantity of India bafts returned from the Portendick trade in 1830 because "the greater part of them [is] very much discoloured,[2] damaged and deteriorated in value by being stored at this settlement over the rainy season." An examination was instituted in connection with a claim made by the merchants, through William Forster, for a remittance of duty already paid on the bafts. It is significant that although Pellegrin was a prominent merchant in the Portendick trade, and doubtless a member of the Portendick Company, he was appointed to undertake a survey of this nature.

His particular success in the gum trade was recognised in St. Mary's with the result that Forster appears to have entered into partnership with him for a period in order to exploit gum. In 1834, the two merchants despatched the schooner "Rebecca" of forty-eight tons and the brig "Governor Temple" of one hundred tons for Portendick; on their return they announced their intention

1. C.O. 87/5, February 1831, Rendall to Lord Goderich.
2. C.O. 87/5, 19th February 1831, Report of J.F. Pellegrin & Richard Lloyd to Lt.-Gov. Rendall.

of returning the vessels immediately "as they state there are large quantities of gum still lying there."[1] Pellegrin was no stranger to the Portendick trade, and it is not unreasonable to imagine that he had in Senegal already made contact with the Moors (tenuous as this might have been), and therefore 'Knew the ropes'. His knowledge of French was no less an advantage in a trade of such complexity.

The Jury Courts and the Gambia Militia, too, provided a common meeting ground for all groups concerned with the welfare and defence of the settlement. John Hughes, as Captain in the Militia during the Barra War of 1831, sustained severe injuries to his foot, resulting in lameness and eventual loss of life.[2] Charles Grant, James Finden and Thomas Brown, Thomas Joiner, Jos Degriny and Richard Lloyd are names to be found in the militia lists. Degriny, who was a Mulatto trader, also held a government post as clerk of the Police Court at a salary of £50 per annum and Paymaster of the militia at another £50 p.a.[3] At the same time, that is in 1848, one Thomas Quin, an English Merchant, was appointed Superintendent of Police at a salary of £50 per annum, Collector of Drain rates, Clerk of Councils and Registrar of births, deaths and marriages, appointments which together brought him a salary of £240 p.a. Mulatto and British mercantile clerks were also utilized in the public services. Antione Pierre was sheriff in 1850, and A. Allegre a sergeant of police at the same time.[4] There was

1. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 30th August, Rendall to R.W.Hay.
2. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 23rd June, John Hughes' Petition to Lord Stanley.
3. Blue Book 1850. - Statistics etc., C.O. 90/24.
4. Blue Book 1850. - Statistics etc., C.O. 90/24.

naturally contact between Mulatto and White on official duty, in commercial activity, and at leisure. John Hughes was described as "a companion of Mr. Brown", with whom he unfortunately got up to mischief in St. Mary's. Because of her unorthodox relationship with Brown, young Mrs. Ingram, the mulatto wife of a British official - Thomas Ingram - was sent away to her relatives in Goree by her father and husband. It would seem that "the Magistrates had had great difficulty in preserving the peace before she left ——," but in a short while she had returned to the settlement and gone straight to Mr. Brown's house, even before the Quarantine Officer had boarded the ship! It was an ugly situation which Rendall disliked. "I accompanied the Harbour Master to Mr. Brown who immediately —— gave up the passengers ...",[1] the Lt.-Governor reported to the Secretary of State with relief. There was constant intermingling between those communities which made up the elite in St. Mary's Island.

The purely African community on the Island of St. Mary's was heterogeneous, being an assemblage of persons of African stock who had arrived there from various parts of the River, from Goree and from Sierra Leone, at different times and for a variety of reasons. At the foundation of the settlement the Wolofs of Senegal formed the largest group, for

1. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 14th June, Rendall to R.W. Hay.

without their assistance the merchants would never have found skilled workers among the local inhabitants to build their houses or construct public buildings at the foundation of the settlement. A number of black troops of the 2nd West India Regiment and of the Royal Africa Corps had been equally necessary for clearing the land and transporting building materials. Their numbers were soon swelled out by labourers from Combo and the River states who had heard of the labour shortage on the Island for cutting down trees, burning lime, and general porterage. Many of these soldiers, at their discharge from their regiments, were offered free lots of land in Soldier Town where they lived in thatched huts under distressing conditions which drew comment from Major Rowan in 1826.[1] On MacCarthy Island, their condition was a little improved, though this element was never satisfactorily employed in either of the Islands. Since the Barra war of 1831 refugee children had begun to filter into Bathurst, and throughout the nineteenth century this flight coastwards from the interior was accelerated by other wars; and as the campaign against kidnapping and the slave trade was strengthened by the constant vigilance of trustworthy traders and merchants at the trading stations, so more native children were rescued and despatched to Bathurst for the Lt.-Governor's decision. As young registered apprentices, they were to form a useful element in society.

Perhaps the phenomenon of the nineteenth century in West Africa was the Liberated African. The story of his liberation by ships of the British

1. Rowan Report 1827.

Navy and of his location in Sierra Leone after the condemnation of the slaver by the Vice-Admiralty Court established there has been told by Jean Herskovits.[1] Once liberated, the procedure followed was "to deliver over — all the men fit for His Majesty's service, apprentice a part of the remainder, and then to form villages[2] with those who could not be disposed of." It was the land problem which soon created a crisis as more and more Liberated Africans arrived for location. The situation on the hillslopes of Freetown where erosion was unavoidable became acute, while penetration into inland forests was dangerous because of the hostility of neighbouring tribes. In spite of numerous difficulties, the village-system instituted for these new arrivals by Governor Maxwell in 1814 worked well, resulting in the appearance of homogeneous communities carefully supervised by Managers under the direct control of the Governor.[3]

It was, however, the apprenticeship system that attracted merchants and traders, not only in Sierra Leone but in the distant settlement of St. Mary's. The most influential merchants there had on their own initiative applied for apprentices from Sierra Leone; and indeed Major Rowan found a handful of such children in the colony. William Forster had three boys and one girl between the ages of ten and thirteen; the boys had been put on board his vessel in the River "to be brought up as sailors, and the girl ... put out to be taught

1. Jean Herskovits, "Liberated Africans and the History of Lagos colony to 1886", unpublished Thesis, Oxford University, 1960.
2. Ibid. Chapters I & II.
3. Herskovits, "Liberated Africans", Chapters I & II.

needlework." Forster was satisfied with their progress but hesitated to express any opinion as to the economic benefits they would bring him. Yet the presence of Liberated African Apprentices in St. Mary's was for an economic purpose; for the merchants saw in the indenture system a possible answer to their seasonal labour problem when the natives of the River states who had sought employment in Bathurst during the dry season returned to their homes to farm crops. Charles Grant emphasised the precarious nature of an economy dependent on a spasmodic labour supply like theirs - where labourers came from the surrounding neighbourhood, and artificers and sailors from Goree. They therefore welcomed Liberated Africans in their midst to form "the useful class in Society," the class of artisans and labourers which could earn a comfortable livelihood in the settlement where wages were relatively high.[1] Of course they also hoped to keep labour dependent on them for as long as possible; and while they complained that their demands for apprentices from Sierra Leone had always exceeded the number of boys sent them, they were all agreed that the term of apprenticeship was too short, eighteen years being far too tender an age to be responsible for oneself. Nathaniel Waterman admitted that had he realized that apprentices were not to be bound till the age of twenty-one he would never have applied for any.[2]

Officials too had become interested in the suggestion for a liberated African settlement in the Gambia. The year before merchants approached Rowan on the subject of apprentices, Chief Justice Rendall of Sierra Leone, who had

1. Rowan Report 1827, Merchants' letters to Rowan, 1826.
2. Rowan Report 1827, Merchants' letters to Rowan, 1826.

been sent to report on conditions of that place had recommended that "one or two hundred Liberated Africans might be placed under the care of a Superintendent" on some of the islands of the River like MacCarthy where they could cultivate land and soon relieve the Colonial Government of the burden of making provision for them. Beyond this, Rendall saw the planting of such government 'agents' in the midst of native tribes as the building of a bridge between that government and those tribes, "proving to the natives the real objects we are anxious to attain, and thus strengthen their confidence in our good intentions towards them ...."[1] In short, Liberated Africans would not only increase commerce with, but would spread civilization into, the interior of Africa. It was therefore not surprising that Major Rowan too made recommendations for the location of Liberated Africans in Gambia on a fairly large scale.

This, unfortunately, provided the Government of Sierra Leone with an ideal opportunity for reducing its criminal population as well as its sickly dependents. In the 'thirties, cargoes of 'Acoos', 'Congos', 'Hiboos', 'Mokos', 'Pappaws', 'Housas',[2] - many in a very poor state of health, and among them a good number of hardened criminals - were landed at the port of Bathurst. Even in 1826 Rowan had observed that all who had been convicted of crime in the Assizes that year had come from the recent arrivals from Sierra Leone. The plight of many of them in the crossing from one port to another was vividly told by one John Foster Duffy, Master of the schooner

1. C.O. 267/65, 1825, vol.1. 1st December 1824, Rendall to Hamilton.
2. C.O. 87/16, 1835-36, Gambia Returns of Liberated Africans, 22nd July 1835, Rendall to Glenelg.

"Governor Campbell", commissioned to transport three hundred Liberated Africans from Freetown to Bathurst in November 1835. Many had embarked naked and in a poor state of health; and as no blankets or clothing had been issued at Freetown for their use, Duffy was obliged to distribute the mats, "duck frocks and kilts" which had been entrusted to him from England for delivery at Bathurst. Small-pox broke out soon after the ship sailed; twenty-eight died of the disease at sea, while the others arrived in Bathurst badly distressed by the cold weather at sea and only a short time to live.[1]

In St. Mary's itself the picture remained a gloomy one for many years. The Return for 1834 showed that on the 1st January that year there were already 548 Liberated Africans in the settlement; by June 1834 they had been joined by 299 others, making a total of 847 distressed immigrants. In that period of six months 156 had died, and 305 had entered hospital.[2] This was the greatest problem, unforseen to those who had advocated the advantages that would accrue to a colony dependent on commerce, from unlimited supplies of imported labour. That most Liberated Africans were unfit for work on landing in Bathurst became a serious liability to the Colonial Government, for the cost of maintaining such large numbers was almost prohibitive to a young colony in receipt of a small Parliamentary grant. The situation did not improve with the arrival of

1. Ibid. 25th November 1835, Report of John Foster Duffy to George Rendall (C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1.
2. (Secretariat Archives, Gambia, Despatch No. 66, 16th October, 1834, ((Rendall to R.W.Hay)
(Return of the number of Liberated Africans under the Government.

more sick immigrants in the middle of the rainy season in 1832 and 1833.

The Medical Report on these distressed immigrants for 1834 showed that the most frequent illnesses were debility (very likely the result of malaria), dropsy, chronic diarrhoea, and ulcers. Various factors accounted for the low standard of health, such as "long confinement in 'slave-houses' prior to embarkation, want of cleanliness and ventilation on board 'slave ships', consequent alterations in dress, food, habits, and, not the least, change of climate."[1] In short, the horrors of the middle passage and the wastage of human lives had not been effectively reduced three decades after the Abolition Act of 1807. At first it looked as if these bewildered and emaciated souls would never do more than await relief from the settlement, not that the colony could afford to run a welfare service of the kind recommended by the Colonial Surgeons. Far from being provided with "airy, spacious and clean accommodation, abundance of nourishing food, and sufficient clothing",[2] the daily ration was 3d. per patient, and over ninety patients were crowded into the portion of the military hospital meant to hold forty! Some of them did survive to join the less sickly who had already been located.

As in Sierra Leone, the Governor was ultimately responsible for their welfare, for the Liberated African service in the Gambia was "founded upon forms transmitted from Sierra Leone for our guidance."[3] It was the special

(C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1.
1. (Secretariat Archives, Gambia, Despatch No. 26, 9th April 1834, Rendall to
(R.W. Hay.
(Enclosure Medical Report for 1833 by Andrew Foulis and James Donovan.
2. Ibid.
3. Secretariat Archives, Despatch No. 66, 16th October 1834, Rendall to R.W.Hay.

task of the Director of the Liberated African Department to locate the cargoes of immigrants which poured into St. Mary's in the 'thirties. On first arriving, the recaptives were directed to the Liberated African Yard for sorting, after which the comparatively healthy were immediately apprenticed to the merchants and their mistresses, to some of the Wolofs and the discharged soldiers. A quota of fit men was usually kept back in the Yard "as prisoners are kept in gaols" under gaolers,[1] specifically for employment on public works under the direction of the Clerk of Works. From October to December 1833, for example, this group was engaged in raising and widening the dyke embankment in Bathurst, at the rate of 6d. per person per day, the total amount of £49.19.6. being credited to a fund for their subsistence.[2] In 1841, Dr. Madden found some of them employed in making a new road towards Oyster Creek. After a period, these men on forced labour would be set free to find employment of their choosing, their allowance of provisions being continued for a short time after.[3]

It was at Goderich village, at the extremity of St. Mary's Island, and in MacCarthy Island that the Government undertook the difficult task of rehabilitation through its own Managers. The purpose was to build up communities which would eventually become self-supporting through their own

1. C.O. 267/173, Madden Report, 1841. Section under Liberated Africans.
2. (C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1.
   (Secretariat Archives, Despatch No.66, 16th October 1834, Rendall to R.W.Hay.
3. Madden Report, 1841, Section under Liberated Africans.

labours. For that reason brickworks and farms were started at Goderich specially for the "convalescent from hospital and those emaciated from former sickness and suffering...[who] were enabled to enjoy better food than their ordinary rations, with such light labour as was likely to be beneficial to them."[1] When sufficiently strong, they were sent on to MacCarthy Island where they also made bricks and worked on farms, besides forming the greater part of the Militia force there. The Government's policy was always to apprentice as many as could find masters "owing to their having greater means of employing them as sailors, canoemen, farmers and squarers of mahogany."[2] Those who had to be located were placed with their countrymen in their first year and given plots for farming. Lord Glenelg, the Secretary of State, did warn the Lt.-Governor, however, that it was not enough to place these newcomers on land, but that the Government was to "provide by all proper methods for the moral and religious instruction as well as for the physical comfort of the Africans ..."[3]

Thus the Government looked to the Wesleyan Mission established in St. Mary's and its dependencies for assistance, but Rev. Thomas Dove, stationed at MacCarthy Island did not think conditions on that dependency favourable to the health or wellbeing of the recaptives. The diet consisted of boiled

1. Secretariat Archives, Despatch No.66, 16th October 1834, Rendall to R.W.Hay.
2. C.O. 87/14, 1836, vol.1. 14th July, Rendall to Glenelg.
3. " " " " " 3rd February, 1835, Glenelg to Rendall.

corn with no meat "and the consequence is, many are going into eternity every week." Those who managed to stay alive had very little to incite them to industry.[1] Dove found them ignorant of the proper methods of cultivation, and suggested that the erection of saw-mills might provide them with better employment. Such ventures, however, were to be left to private enterprise as Lord Glenelg had suggested.[2] Instead a great responsibility was placed on Managers and Overseers who had to provide work for persons in a debilitated state with a disinclination for work. It is not surprising that the Governor complained of "numerous changes and inefficiency of the Managers and Overseers at MacCarthy Island" in his report of 1834.[3]

It was probably the Government's aim to employ persons of African descent as Managers in the hope that better understanding would be more easily established between them and the motley crowd. Mulattoes or Wolofs from the Goree and Senegal settlers were the best qualified. At any rate, in 1839, one Simon Pignard was appointed successor to Henry Steinbach. He was doubtless a native of Sene-Gambia, for his previous post had been that of Government Interpreter of native languages for which he was admirably suited, "being a very active, steady person, and well practised in the Mandingo, Joloff, Syria and Joalla or Feloop languages besides speaking English and French fluently."[4] The fact that a street in Bathurst was named after him was

1. C.O. 87/16, 1835-36, Gambia Returns of Liberated Africans, July 22nd 1835, Rendall to Glenelg. Enclosure - Letter from Thomas Dove, June 10th 1835.
2. C.O. 87/14, 1836, vol.1. 3rd Feb. 1835, Glenelg to Rendall.
3. Secretariat Archives, Despatch No.66,16th October 1834,Rendall to R.W.Hay.
4. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 15th November 1834, Rendall to R.W.Hay.

tribute to his public service. Yet it was not on Managers like Pignard that the future of the Liberated African depended but on the benevolence of merchants and traders in Bathurst.

Only the mercantile community was equipped to teach skills that would enable the recaptives to earn their own living eventually, and perhaps attain a modicum of independence. Government contribution to their welfare was limited because of lack of funds, but merchants and missionaries carried on for many more years, especially through the apprenticeship system which worked fairly well for both parties. The commercial community was determined to use this new element in society for the expansion of business, while the Wesleyan Mission was given fresh stimulus for activity. Within a period of five years, Thomas Joiner employed nearly a hundred apprentices, the majority of whom were put on his vessels trading up and down the River. Others were attached to carpenters, blacksmiths, wax-cleaners and lime-burners, the rest being employed as labourers and domestic servants. Over a longer period before 1835, Charles Grant had employed forty-two apprentices, and Edward Lloyd, Edward Bocock, William Forster, John Pellegrin and other leading merchants had done likewise, some apprenticing a few more and others less. The Lt.-Governor himself indentured twelve servants and labourers to work in Government House; a discharged soldier who was making a living as a butcher found himself an apprentice, so did the trader, the lime-burner, the wood cutter.[1] The influx of cheap labour in the settlement was to be a great boon once that labour force could be mobilised.

1. C.O. 87/16, 1835-36, Gambia Returns of Liberated Africans, 25th July 1835, Rendall to R.W.Hay.

Lt.-Governor Rendall, anxious to facilitate this process had made the Indenture system fairly straightforward,[1] by which a person was apprenticed for a fixed number of years and promised "honestly, orderly and obediently in all things [to] behave....." The Master on his part promised to teach the apprentice "the English Language, the principles of the Christian religion, and useful personal, domestic services, after the best manner ...." Apprenticeships originally extended over a period of five years but the protests of merchants against a system which deprived them of the labours of apprenticed youths at eighteen had caused Major Rowan to recommend the lengthening of the period to seven years.[2] While it may have been reasonable to apprentice children till the age of twenty-one, it proved most injurious for adults to be bound to a Master for seven years, even with board, lodging and clothing provided and a small monthly salary. In 1839, all indentures were abolished.[3] This, however, was not to be the end of apprenticeships in the Gambia, for the system had to be revived to meet the refugee problem of the mid-nineteenth century. On the whole, the system worked well in the settlement judging by the small number of cases of hardship brought before the courts. As Rendall put it: "This town is so small that the Colonial

1. Ibid. See Enclosure; Secretariat Archives Gambia, Despatch No. 66, 16th October 1834, Rendall to R.W.Hay:-
£1.12s.6d. was charged for each Indenture to meet the expense of the apprentice's passage from Sierra Leone, "which sum is carried to the credit of the Liberated Africans in their accounts for subsistence."
2. Madden Report, 1841, under Liberated Africans.
3. Ibid.

Secretary, the Director or myself must be made acquainted with any improper treatment should any persons be inclined to subject them to it." One safeguard against cruelty on the part of Masters was the periodic inspection of all apprentices by the Lt.-Governor.[1]

Dr. Madden, having observed the place of Liberated Africans in St. Mary's, reported that it was "a most unsuitable home for their moral development and for fostering habits of industry." With indentures abolished, employment had become a problem, especially as the land alloted them in and around Bathurst was sandy and swampy, depending on the seasons, so that they could not make a living as farmers. Some earned a living "as mechanics, sailors and labourers, but are far behind the Joloffs and other natives of this part of Africa",[2] so wrote the Lt.-Governor. Indeed, Madden concluded that they had "been freed from the horrors on board slave ships only to be faced with disease and privation in their freedom."[3] Their children too were thoroughly neglected, he reported; there was not one at the only school in the town, even though some of the Wolofs sent their children to school with improved results in their behaviour. Liberated African children would appear to have been thoroughly neglected - "brought here in barbarism and....left in

1. C.O. 87/14, 1836, vol.1. 14th July, Rendall to Glenelg.
2. Madden Report, 1841, Lt.-Gov. Huntley to Dr. Madden.
3. Madden Report, 1841.

barbarism.... in a state of such ignorance and destitution...."[1] Yet this was not the whole picture since as apprentices to the merchants many of them were attached to semi-skilled workers for a number of years.

It needed to be pointed out to the residents of St. Mary's that they were not, however, providing their young apprentices with opportunities for education in the sense in which it was understood in Sierra Leone. There, "no child who had not been in school at least twelve months could be apprenticed."[2]; the Government could insist on this policy because funds were available, and teachers could be provided by the Church Missionary Society or other Missions established in the colony. Besides, society in Sierra Leone was composed of more prosperous elements and a larger body of educated citizens who themselves could influence public opinion, and the Government when necessary, towards philanthropy and particularly the education of Liberated African children. In the young settlement of St. Mary's there was little to compare with this. For its mercantile community was still preoccupied with establishing its trade in the River, in Portendick, in the Casamance, for which labour, skilled and unskilled, was probably its most urgent need. The result was that the first generation, and sometimes the second and third too, of immigrants remained illiterate, forming the class of manual workers in St. Mary's. Their descendants fortunately were to enjoy school education provided not only by Missionary bodies, but by the Government itself.

1. Madden Report, 1841.
2. J. Herskovits, "Liberated Africans", Chapter II.

The role of Missions in the settlement will form the subject of further discussion; but it was the Wesleyans who were available at this time for moral and spiritual services to the newcomers. They organised catechumen classes for young people between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five, as the Mission registers indicate, and subsequently offered them Baptism at which their tribal names were replaced by the European names of their sponsors - Rendall, Forster, Grant, Lloyd, Goddard and others.[1] This was part of the process of civilization, and, superficial as the gesture might have seemed then, it came to assume deep significance among future generations of Liberated Africans, who felt a closeness with their European employers more than with the indigenous tribes in the River states. In order to obviate a social evil, the Missionaries put into force a policy of "compulsory matrimony" by which young men and women were partnered off and married as soon after arrival as was practicable. In 1832, the Manager at MacCarthy Island was instructed "to find good husbands for the women, taking care to marry them always to their own country people ...."[2] On one occasion in 1835, Rev. William Fox celebrated thirty weddings, taking the view that that was the lesser of two evils;[3] though Lt.-Governor Huntley reported that the system had proved quite unsatisfactory resulting in a number of divorce suits.[4] It had been an attempt to produce cohesiveness in an otherwise scattered body

1. Methodist Mission Archives, Gambia, Register of Baptisms 1831-1872.
2. J.M.Gray, "History of the Gambia", (Cambridge 1940) p.364.
3. Fox, "Brief History", p.373.
4. Madden Report 1841, Lt.-Governor Huntley to Madden.

of distressed and bewildered immigrants to a strange land. With no common tribal organization, they were united only in the "fellowship in past suffering",[1] but in the struggle for survival and for recognition, a community spirit emerged which was to be their most powerful weapon against oppression, and the greatest stimulus to self-help.

The settlement founded in 1816, then, had maintained its heterogeneous character for the first half of the nineteenth century. Its diverse communities were dominated by the merchant oligarchy, which, in the absence of homogeneity, was able to establish allegiances and propose goals in the society. Having secured the confidence and support of the Colonial Government, the merchant group turned to the artisans and mechanics for the development of trade with capital which it provided. In short, while social barriers in St. Mary's were fairly rigid, the communities on the Island were nevertheless interdependent, especially in the pursuit of commerce, and even in the defence of their homes. There was good reason why Thomas Joiner accompanied the Commandant or Lt.-Governor on any important mission undertaken to neighbouring chiefs and kings. Without mutual help the settlement would never have survived. The revenue alone depended upon the increase of trade which presupposed participation and cooperation by all communities. When Liberated Africans began to play a prominent role in the commercial life of the Gambia settlement, they were no longer pitied and regarded as "the scum of the earth"; as the most reliable traders of the merchants, they came to assume leadership among Africans of whatever origin in the second half of the nineteenth century.

1. J.M.Gray, "History", p.365.

CHAPTER III

TRADE AND PROTECTION IN THE RIVER GAMBIA 1816-1888

For centuries the trade of the River Gambia had been organised by African long distance traders known in the Mandinka language as Julas; and when British merchants in St. Mary's began to establish business in the River, they found there a highly developed caravan trade with the interior. The whole of this trade passed through the hands of the Julas, whose responsibility it was to conduct caravans from the remotest areas to the banks of the Gambia. Passing the coffles from one Jula town to another, they protected and fed the Travellers, and, by the influence they exercised in the Councils of the Native Chiefs, were often able to keep the roads open. For all these services, for conducting a caravan to its destination, they expected a commission; and for a long time they had received from the Trader to whom they conducted the travelling merchant and his goods, a premium of 10% on the value of the entire amount bartered.[1] The barter trade was a diverse trade in gold, wax, ivory, hides and even slaves (notwithstanding the Abolition Act), exchangeable for gunpowder, tobacco, rum, beads and cottons at the termini of the trade routes - Yarbutenda and Fattatenda. These ports were situated in the kingdom of Wuli at a distance of about three hundred miles from St. Mary's. Thus it was that a large entrepôt trade conducted in that

1. C.O. 87/45, 1849, vol.1. 16th September, Blue Book Report, Governor G. MacDonnell to Earl Grey.

kingdom increased the political influence of its king, and in consequence aggravated inter-state rivalry.

Wuli then was the gateway to the interior, and the trade flourished or declined as political relations between it and the interior states like Bondou improved or deteriorated. For this reason one of the major problems of the trade was an inevitable involvement in native politics for Government and merchants, necessitating treaties of friendship and protection with kings and chiefs of the River. It proved a difficult task to organize legitimate trade through warring states without participation in such wars; but the hazards of the African trade were already familiar to merchants like Nathaniel Waterman who had had twenty years' experience of it.[1] After all, negotiation for gum with truculent Moorish tribes on the banks of the Senegal had never been easy. Having been displaced from the lucrative gum trade, however, in the process of which much valuable property had been lost,[2] the merchants of St. Mary's were not prepared to endure quietly further commercial trauma. They tended to react violently to native opposition, and whenever they did so, trade was the more injured. The nineteenth century was to be a dreary training period in the complicated art of Native diplomacy.

Governor Charles MacCarthy had very early understood the situation in the River and had pursued a conciliatory policy towards the natives with the result that a semi-military base had been established in the king of Catabar's dominions in the middle River in 1823, with a view to extending trade. It

1. C.O. 267/69, 1825, vol.5. 20th September, Matthew Forster to R.W.Hay.
2. C.O. 267/56, 1822, 21st January, C.MacCarthy to Lord Bathurst.

was interpreted by local potentates, however, as a political move. Indeed, Catabar's voluntary cession of territory to the British was mainly to strengthen his defences against potential enemies, and to enhance his prestige by attracting commerce to his kingdom. This did not fail to arouse the jealousy of rival kings, especially those in the Upper River who saw their influence in the entrepôt trade threatened by the new arrangement. Wuli claims could not be ignored, for commercial prosperity either in MacCarthy Island or St. Mary's was impossible without its cooperation. It was left to Governor Neil Campbell to sign a treaty of friendship with the newly elected king of Wuli, in continuation of the policy of tenuous alliances with native kings for the protection of traders.

On the 15th May 1827, an Agreement was signed by Campbell and the king in the presence of three witnesses, one of them being John Riley, who did business at Fattatenda and "has resided in the Upper Gambia more than any other Stranger ...."[1] It was a treaty which placed a great deal of responsibility and trust on a ruler who himself was, in theory, a tributary to the king of Bondou. Its terms were comprehensive:

> If the subjects or property of either party should be attacked or obstructed upon the River, the other party will use every exertion to obtain redress and to grant assistance.
>
> If two other parties are disposed to engage in hostilities, the two contracting parties before mentioned, will use their utmost exertions to prevent these extremities ...
>
> The king of Wuli ... engages not to allow any fellow creature to be sold or purchased within his territory ...

1. C.O. 267/82, 1827, 16th May, Neil Campbell to Lord Bathurst.

> King Quai engages to open the paths to Bondou ... so that the traders may come freely to Fattatenda with their gold, ivory, wax ...."[1]

There was no mention of a stipend in the treaty itself, but it was the custom for the Colonial Government to offer such kings from whom it sought protection for traders an annual subsidy, generally paid in merchandise.

From Campbell's description of Fattatenda - "only three thatched huts, and very little trade"[2] - it would seem that the object of the merchants was to revive the trade which had been diverted from the Gambia to the Upper Senegal in the north, and the Numez to the south, since the destruction of James fort by the French in 1779. Indeed, a general optimism about the trade of the interior was to be the driving force behind mercantile enterprise in the River for many more decades. Governors were no less infected by this optimism; Campbell thought that for the pursuit of trade the Gambia was "as fine a field as nature can offer in any part of the world, from a noble River, a productive soil, ... and a finer climate than [any] upon the Coast; besides the easy export of valuable productions ... abounding on the banks of the River, or carried there."[3]

The natural advantages of a navigable river were to appeal to successive Governors of the West African Settlements on their periodic visits to the Gambia settlement, and some of them were inclined to think that the conduct of trade there was a simple matter, depending largely on the initiative of

1. C.O. 267/82, 16th May, 1827, Neil Campbell to Lord Bathurst.
2. Ibid. 14th May.
3. Ibid. 16th May.

the merchants of St. Mary's. A very realistic report on the settlement had, however, been submitted by Mr. George Rendall, when Chief Justice of Sierra Leone, in 1824, in which he had emphasised the hazards of long distance trading in the interior of Africa. The greatest obstacle to the growth of the trade was the difficulty of travelling far with safety, for which reason it was essential to provide "fixed points where [the natives] can always command a certain sale for their produce ... otherwise ... they neglect to gather or leave [trade goods] to waste rather than encounter the difficulties of the path ...." Rendall showed how the French, by establishing a factory in Galam in the Upper Senegal had not only doubled the volume of trade in gold, ostrich feathers, wax and other commodities, but had actually tapped new sources of gum.[1]

Throughout the nineteenth century, French colonial policy in neighbouring Senegal and Casamance influenced both official and unofficial opinion in the Gambia. The merchants for their part came to regard government protection of trade as an obligation due to them. The most attractive side of French protection was the maintenance of two steam-boats on the Senegal in constant communication between St. Louis and all factories (often established with government assistance in stores and manpower) in the Upper Senegal, from which centres government agents were despatched into the interior to induce the Julas to lead their caravans to the banks of that river.[2] It was such

1. C.O. 267/65, 1825, vol.1. 1st December 1824, George Rendall to D.Hamilton.
2. C.O. 267/65, 1825, vol.1. 1st December 1824, Rendall to Hamilton.

sponsorship that the Gambia merchants expected from their government; and indeed the gum trade to Portendick was highly subsidized from imperial funds[1] in compensation for the loss of the Senegal gum trade, which was found to be inaccessible from the Gambia, the gum forests being too far distant.[2] General Campbell suggested too that attitudes in St. Mary's were largely determined by a "want of funds" on the part of its merchants, scarcely one of whom was not in debt to the House of Forster and Smith; and the Commandant confirmed this.[3] Even so, a dozen of them, including Thomas Joiner, had promised to send goods to the value of £7,600 to open the port of Fattatenda in 1829.[4] Financial embarrassment was surely not unexpected in those early years of the settlement when, according to the merchants themselves, they had already invested £250,000[5] in houses, store-rooms, river craft and merchandise in the hope of realizing substantial profits in the near future. Such hopes were not easily met even when government protection was afforded; and the pursuit of commerce in the River became a fierce struggle for economic survival, not only from native aggression, but, unexpectedly, from French competition.

1. C.O. 267/73, 1826, vol.3. 15th May, Merchants' letter to Sir Neil Campbell.
2. C.O. 267/62, 1824, vol.3. 9th February, Matthew Forster to the Board of Trade.
3. C.O. 267/82, 1827, vol.1. 16th May, Campbell to Bathurst.
4. C.O. 87/2, 1829, vol.1. 18th May, W.Hutton, Colonial Secretary, to R.W.Hay.
5. C.O. 87/1, 1828, vol.1. 6th May, Merchants' Memorial to W. Huskisson.

Disillusionment came to the merchants much sooner than they had imagined with the French reoccupation of their former factory at Albreda (fifteen miles above Bathurst) in 1817, a year after the founding of St. Mary's Island. The "comptoir" of Albreda was in extent only 400 yards by 300 yards, situated in a native town on the north bank of the River. It had no civil or military establishment, only a Resident who was a merchant from Senegal; and by 1822 there was only one good house belonging to him, and three or four small ones occupied by a handful of French traders.[1] It would appear that it was the apparent insignificance of the place that had misled Governor MacCarthy, although his official reason for not preventing the French Commandant of Senegal from reoccupying Albreda was based on the Treaty of Paris (1814). This stipulated that His Most Christian Majesty should be put in possession of all forts and places occupied by the French on the West Coast in the year 1792. MacCarthy's only restriction was to prevent French vessels and traders from proceeding above Fort James (a short distance from Albreda).[2]

This re-occupation created serious tensions in the settlement for forty years, for not only did French commercial rivalry reduce British trade in the Gambia, but in this way the very revenues of St. Mary's were impoverished. "I am ... at a loss to conjecture," wrote Acting Governor Hamilton in 1824, "why the late Sir Charles MacCarthy suffered them to establish the factory at Albreda at the time we were forming the settlement at St. Mary's, and to have

1. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.1. 16th June, K. Macaulay to Lord Bathurst.
2. C.O. 267/47, 1818, vol.1. 3rd January, MacCarthy to Bathurst.

continued there undisturbed ...."[1] Once established in the Gambia, the French were determined to stay, so that Albreda developed into a major diplomatic issue, necessitating constant, but fruitless, representations to the Government in France through the British Ambassador in Paris. While the problem remained unsolved, so long did the Gambia trade remain insecure and indeed ruinous to British merchants. Yet no hopes of prompt executive measures by the French government were held out by Sir Charles Stuart at the embassy. He could only see a solution lying in "the determination of H.M.'s Government to enforce their claims ... by the expulsion of the French factories from the Gambia ....."[2] It was not likely that the Foreign Office would exert itself in this direction over an insignificant British possession like the Gambia; and Albreda remained in French hands for forty years.

At first the local government took no firm line against Albreda; French vessels had free access to it, and were allowed to land cargoes there without paying duties, provided that such vessels deposited their papers and invoices with the Collector of Customs in Bathurst before they proceeded up the River. Any goods landed in Bathurst itself were liable to pay the 6% duties paid by British merchants on foreign articles.[3] Similarly, ships of the French navy were expected to salute the British flag as they passed up the River. Thus the authorities attempted to establish their sovereignty to the River

1. C.O. 267/60, 1824, vol.1. 24th November, D.Hamilton to Bathurst.
2. C.O. 267/55, 1821, vol.3. 11th January, Sir Charles Stuart to Foreign Office.
3. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 8th November, G.Rendall to T. Spring Rice.

Gambia guaranteed to them by the treaty of Versailles of 1783 and confirmed at Paris in 1814; for the time being no adequate solution was proposed for the collection of customs duties from the French. Albreda, therefore, very soon became a flourishing entrepôt for French goods, which were thence distributed by native canoes throughout the riverain states. When the Government saw the folly of its own liberal policy, MacCarthy urged the Secretary of State for the colonies to exclude the French from the Gambia. An unceasing flow of petitions and letters emanated from the mercantile community which now saw its hopes of an exclusive trade in the river threatened.

It was, however, the creation of Goree into a free port which had immediate repercussions on Albreda, converting it into a depôt for an extensive circulation of contraband goods, particularly cheap American tobacco and rum. As the merchants very aptly put it, they now found themselves "cramped in their operations and their commerce very materially injured - the profits of the fair and legitimate trader being wrested from his hands, by the facilities afforded for smuggling, which it is utterly impossible to prevent."[1] Vessels bearing French colours continued to enter the River loaded with coral, amber, brandy, rum, wine, tobacco and beads, of which rum and tobacco were the principal articles of trade and were by law forbidden entry into British colonies except in British vessels.[2] The

1. C.O. 267/56, 1822, vol.1. August, Merchants' Memorial to Lord Bathurst.
2. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 8th November, G.Rendall to T. Spring Rice.

outcome was that those merchants who had agents in Goree began to import cheaper goods through Albreda for distribution to their factors in the River, rather than continue to import the same articles from England at higher prices with the problem of their disposal at profitable terms.[1] Whether they participated in the smuggling trade or not, the merchants were united in their indignation against French activities. Their grievances fell under four heads: cheaper goods of American origin glutted the limited Gambian market so that the English were undersold; this developed into an extensive contraband trade, which inevitably revived the slave trade, for "so long as the native merchant can safely carry on this nefarious but lucrative trade, it is in vain to point out to him any other source of profit ...."[2] The Commandant was able to detail the overland route followed from the banks of the Gambia to the Senegal;[3] but, what was equally disturbing, was the disastrous effects of the smuggling trade on the revenue; and not least, the discourtesy shown to the British flag by French men-of-war visiting Albreda.[4] Memorials, despatches, letters by influential business men like Matthew Forster, even personal representations by selected deputations of merchants to the Colonial Office, were not attended with success.

1. C.O. 267/83, 1827, vol.3. 1st August, Resolution of the Board of Commerce.
2. C.O. 267/56, 1822, vol.1. August, Merchants' Memorial to Lord Bathurst.
3. C.O. 267/56, 1822, vol.1. 21st August, Alexander Grant to C.MacCarthy.
4. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.2. 29th March, Alexander Findlay to Acting Governor K.Macaulay.

When, in response to the urgent appeals of the merchants, Captain Alexander Findlay on his own responsibility forbade all French vessels from entering the River till the British Government should decide what rights the French had there, he was severely reprimanded by Lord Bathurst for threatening repressive measures against the flag of a country with which Britain was at peace.[1] Nor could the Governors of the West African settlements bring permanent relief. In 1825 Major General Turner did open the port of Bathurst to American tobacco and lumber for a year, "to enable the merchants to compete with that thrown in by [the French] from Goree."[2] To the merchants, however, no other solution seemed more reasonable than constituting Bathurst a free port like Goree. This alone they believed would redress the situation, and restore to the settlement the duties which were being enjoyed by the Goree Authorities.[3] Their proposal, unfortunately, was contrary to Orders in Council, which prohibited American Merchant vessels from entering British colonial possessions, and excluded French wines from free entry into such territories for want of reciprocity. Findlay was reluctant to incur the displeasure of Lord Bathurst again for the sake of the mercantile community, and anxious though he was for their prosperity and for the collection of the revenue, he declared that it was "not in his power to accede to their requests ...."[4]

Without African middle men from the River states who became the organizers of the illicit trade, carrying the cheap goods from Albreda

1. C.O. 267/80, 18th January 1825, Lord Bathurst to Major General Turner.
2. C.O. 267/80, 3rd July 1825, Turner to Bathurst.
3. C.O. 267/83, 1827, vol.3. Resolutions of the Board of Commerce, 1st August 1827.
4. C.O. 267/83, 1827, vol.3. 22nd August, W.W.Lewis,Colonial Secretary, for Lt.-Gov. to Merchants.

directly to the markets in the Upper River,[1] it is not unlikely that the smaller merchant in St. Mary's might have acquiesced in a similar role with the possibility of making a comfortable living as supplier of contraband goods to the factories in the interior. For the interest of the chiefs was "to favour the introduction of goods amongst themselves on the cheapest terms - whether offered by the smuggler or the legal trader."[2] In any event, there was a growing minority of French traders in St. Mary's who had originated in Goree and who sometimes had relatives among the traders in Albreda itself, so that contraband goods would have been easily available to them. In 1828, for instance, a Monsieur Ducand Valentine, a Mulatto from Goree, was one of the traders at Albreda (heavily suspected of slave-dealing), and in the same period there were at least two other Valentines trading from St. Mary's.[3] To these lesser business men, the large mercantile houses in Bathurst, disposing of merchandise at prohibitive prices, were as much an economic threat as the French with cheap goods at Albreda. Nevertheless, most of them were so closely attached to the leading merchants (often by consanguinity), that the mercantile community always spoke with one voice, all petitions purporting to represent equally the needs of a unified body.

It was perhaps to their advantage that at that stage, St. Mary's was only an operational base for a trading community whose commercial activity

1. C.O. 267/65, 1825, vol.1. 1st December 1824. Rendall to D.Hamilton.
2. C.O. 87/48, 1850, vol.1. 18th May, Governor G.MacDonnell to Earl Grey.
3. C.O. 87/1, 15th April 1828, Capt. Findlay to R.W.Hay.

extended over a wide network of trade routes, not only eastward into the interior, but northward to Portendick and the Saloum River, and southward to the Casamance and Bissagos Isles. The variety of the trade provided them with opportunity both to do some business on their own account and to act as agents of those who were more prosperous and preferred the sedentary life of Bathurst. In each area of trade, French competition had to be faced, and it was particularly Mulatto and African agents who bore the brunt of the inconveniences of trade. Except for the Portendick trade, every branch of trade had its 'fleet' of native canoes and traders, who were its mainspring. They carried food supplies of corn, salt, salted fish, and bullocks from the Saloum River, and rice from the Casamance for the Bathurst market and the riverain tribes at the time of the year when food was shortest - during the rainy season.[1] So important were the branch trades of the Gambia, that when British merchants agitated against the French trade at Albreda, the Governor of Senegal, Colonel Schmaltz, made an equally strong protest to Sir Charles MacCarthy against the corn trade engaged in by the small craft of the Gambia "in the coasts and rivers situated between Cape Verde and the Gambia, a circumstance the more destructive to the interests of those inhabitants of Goree ...."[2] In the Casamance region, too, the French showed every determination to secure a monopoly of the trade with the natives; and by 1838 they were building a fort in Seju situated in that River. Lt.-Governor

1. C.O. 87/69, 1860, vol.1. 24th April, Governor G.d'Arcy to Duke of Newcastle.
2. C.O. 267/51, 1820, vol.1. 16th June, C.MacCarthy to Lord Bathurst.

Clogstoun and the merchants of St. Mary's suspected that the object of the naval demonstration which accompanied its erection was to "refuse to allow English vessels to proceed above Seju..."[1], as they had barred entry into the Senegal.

From the foundation of the settlement, Commandants and Lieutenant-Governors were in full sympathy with mercantile aspirations in matters of trade, for on their prosperity depended the swelling of the revenue, and the stability of the settlement. That was the reason for Captain Findlay's firm line against the French whose evasion of customs duties had reduced the revenue of 1824 from £4000 to £2000. Without adequate funds, he complained that he could neither pay off debts owed by Government, nor meet current expenditure, or "recover the settlement in general from the ruinous state it is now in ...."[2] It was, however, not only the French who were blamed for the emptiness of the Colonial Chest, but the West African administrative machinery itself where power was concentrated in a Governor and Council stationed at Sierra Leone, who formulated policies for all the settlements on the Coast. In their memorials, the merchants constantly argued that restrictive trade policies, vigorously enforced from Sierra Leone were "ill adapted to the local situation", with which the Authorities in that place were unfamiliar, resulting inevitably in a "deficiency in the amount of duties levied in the settlement, and still greater deficiency in the amount of Exports."[3] And in this view they had

1. C.O. 87/19, 1838, vol.1. 1st May, Lt.-Governor Clogstoun to Lord Glenelg.
2. C.O. 267/60, 1824, vol.1. 6th November, Findlay to Hamilton.
3. C.O. 87/1, 1828, 6th May, Merchants' Memorial to William Huskisson.

official support.

It was official policy, too, to give whole hearted support to whatever ventures were undertaken by the mercantile community for increasing the volume of trade and thereby improving the state of colonial funds. The 1830s saw the revival of commercial activity in the Upper River and even in Portendick. In May 1831, Lt.-Governor Rendall reported the incorporation of the Tendah Company with a capital of £5000 with the object of exploiting the resources of the interior, beyond the Barracunda Falls.[1] This was to be part of a grandiose scheme to form "caravans of the discharged soldiers ... many of whom are natives of those countries from whence the most valuable trade might be derived ...." It was hoped that these recruits would make reliable agents, able to transact business "with the native merchants of Africa, the Toocolors, Serawoollies, and Mandingoes who trade in coffles backwards and forwards from this River to Sego, Bourrie, Timbuctoo, ..."[2]

Rendall was most enthusiastic about the project, and advocated Government support and protection in return for an offer of 1% of capital proposed by the merchants. No less willing was he to give his blessing to the Banankon Company formed a few months later on the representation of a French gentleman named Monsieur Duranton who was married to the daughter of the Moorish Chief of Kasson. He arrived in St. Mary's to negotiate for the gum of the tribe of Aulad en Barik, which he claimed could reach the Gambia via Banankon near Barracunda, provided annual customs could be guaranteed to the king of Bondou

1. C.O. 87/5, 1831, vol.1. 14th May 1831, Merchants' letter to G.Rendall.
2. C.O. 87/5, 1831, 17th May, Rendall to R.W.Hay.

(through whose territories the caravans would travel), and the king of Wuli (in whose kingdom the gum factory would have to be established).[1] Government gave support to the negotiations and sent presents of bafts and other goods for the Moorish chief and the king of Bondou.[2] The merchants themselves were not slow to follow this up, for it seemed that their dreams of a lucrative gum trade on the banks of the Gambia were about to come true. They immediately despatched one of their number, John Grant, to ascend the River and pave the way for the newly formed companies by opening friendly relations with the interior chiefs.[3] This was still not the full extent of commercial enterprise, for the same merchants were members of the Portendick Company which had prospected for gum in Portendick for nearly ten years. Fairly substantial investment in trade was the general policy; and the fact that they never made substantial profits was often due to the disturbed state of trade areas.

A feature of the trade was its fluctuation between good and bad times, an irritant to the mercantile community and the Administration. Years of optimism and speculation were almost invariably followed by disaster and depression when traders were caught in the cross-currents of native politics in the River. The Barra War of November 1831, fought on the doorstep of St. Mary's, was a struggle for survival; and, but for the very timely reinforcements despatched from Senegal under one Captain Louvel, the history of the

1. C.O. 87/5, 1831, 30th August, Rendall to R.W.Hay.
2. C.O. 87/5, 1831, vol.1. 30th August, Rendall to Hay.
3. Ibid.

settlement might have been very different. The Lt.-Governor himself attributed "the salvation of Bathurst from the most disastrous consequences" to French assistance.[1] The mercantile community played its part in the Colonial Militia, both actively in the field and securing the defences at home; and some of its agents and supercargoes appeared on the casualty list. Success in Barra, however, had seemed to prove the effectiveness of a policy of force towards native rulers, so that when Wuli put up trade barriers the merchants advocated repressive measures to force them down. But that kingdom at a distance of nearly three hundred miles could not be so easily coerced as Barra, three miles across the estuary.

The struggle with Wuli was to develop into a commercial war between trade rivals. Drawing on their European experience, the merchants of St. Mary's called a meeting under the chairmanship of William Forster, and unanimously resolved to lay an embargo on the Upper River, and "abandon the Wuli ground altogether ... and positively to object and refuse to pay the lodging Bars or Customs imposed by the Julas until such time as they shall have made reparation ...."[2] The reason for the interruption of trade and the interception of John Grant's mission into the interior, was the deterioration of good relations between Wuli and Bondou. Concerted action against Wuli showed a determination of purpose and a great deal of resilience in the mercantile body, which, less than a year before was demoralised in

1. C.O. 87/5, 1831, 15th November, Rendall to Hay; C.O. 87/6, 1832, vol.1. 21st November, Merchants' Memorial to Capt. Louvell.
2. C.O. 87/6, 1832, vol.1. 25th June, Merchants' Public Meeting.

face of possible defeat from Barra. It demonstrated, too, an unfortunate misconception of native mentality - a naïvete towards seasoned native men of business. A "blockade of the Upper River"[1] ports was in fact attempted, but with damaging results to the trade of the Gambia, for the Julas merely diverted their caravans to the French factories on the Senegal. This turn of the tables was bemoaned by the merchants three years later, and at a public meeting in October 1835, a resolution was adopted for throwing open the trade "without delay", and for establishing a factory in an eligible spot in the Upper River. Further, they recommended the concluding of a treaty with the chiefs of that region through Government mediation.[2] Attempts at penetrating the Upper River had never been successful. As early as 1829, William Hutton when acting Lt.-Governor had actually secured a cession of land at Fattatenda from the king of Wuli,[3] but the treaty was never sanctioned.

Now the merchants tried again for a vigorous Government trade policy there; they petitioned for the erection of a small fort to be garrisoned by Liberated Africans, under which their traders would find protection.[4] In other words, the patterns of St. Mary's and MacCarthy Island were to be reproduced in the Upper River; only thus did the merchants hope to shift the traders' frontier from the seaboard to the distant hinterland, and the

1. C.O. 87/12, 1835,vol.1. 2nd November, Merchants' letter to Rendall.
2. C.O. 87/12, 1835, November 2nd, Merchants' Petition to Rendall.
3. C.O. 87/2, 1829, 18th May, W.Hutton to R.W.Hay.
4. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 12th June, Merchants' Petition to Rendall.

monopoly of the interior trade secured. They required the Government to go further and regulate that trade by "reducing ... Customs from 10% to 5%", and by limiting those customs to the principal articles of trade such as gold, ivory, wax, hides or gum, "but that the spurious traffic in country cloths, colas, dates, butter, horses etc. be wholly exempted."[1]

Such a policy, if pursued, could not have been in the best interests of trade, for trade relations could not improve where there was a lack of confidence. Caught between the substantial customs of the Julas, and "heavy duties payable in England upon African produce, particularly upon beeswax, hides, ivory and mahogany, which are the staple articles of trade in this River,"[2] the merchants cried for relief. Typically, they demanded relief at the expense of their indigenous counterpart, exemplified in this instance in the proposal for the total abolition of taxes on horses and kolas, articles in great demand in the River. Indeed, so important were kolas for the trade, that in another generation the Government of St. Mary's was collecting a substantial revenue from kola nut duty, a tax which fell heavily on Liberated African entrepreneurs. If the merchants of the 1830s had been willing to take into consideration "the difficulties of the path" emphasized by Chief Justice Rendall ten years earlier, they might have been better able to understand Jula politics.

Protection of trade outside British jurisdiction was to be the dilemma of the Gambia settlement in the nineteenth century. Trade could naturally

1. C.O. 87/12, 1835, 24th October, Merchants' Public Meeting - Resolution.
2. C.O. 267/56, 1822, vol.1. August, Merchants' Memorial to Lord Bathurst.

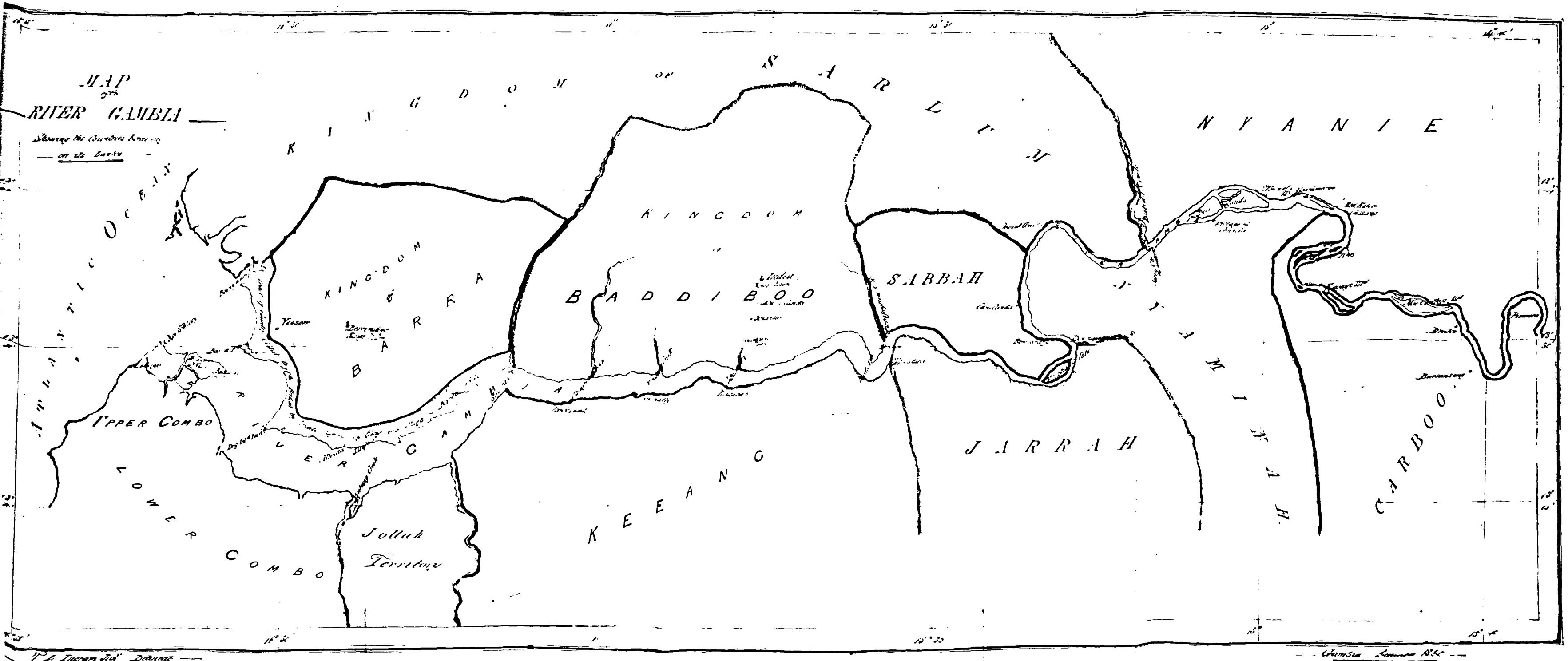
not flourish until capital was sunk into it, yet the unsettled state of the River and the turbulent character of insecure native chieftains prevented commercial elements from that speculation which might have drawn "an extensive trade from the interior which now finds an outlet in the River Senegal and Portuguese Settlement of Geba ...."[1] Neither local officials nor British merchants recognised that African opposition to inland penetration was legitimate. An alliance at this time between their stumbling block, the king of Wuli, and one of his neighbours, king Kemingtang of Upper Niani (a bitter rival of Catabar[2] who was alleged to have slain his father), was regarded as merely a hostile demonstration by predatory chiefs. The latter they described as a "lawless plunderer who waded through blood to the throne, and who is still received with terror and distrust by his neighbours."[3] This at least should have warned them to move cautiously, but Lt.-Governor Rendall was bent on subduing another enemy of his merchants. There was apprehension that valuable property in vessels and capital should be at the mercy of any "Warlike Chief" who fancied them; the estimate of capital circulating in the River trade in 1835 was placed at £60,000, seven vessels with valuable cargo being engaged in the trade.[4]

Matters came to a head with the seizure of the "Ora" (a schooner belonging to Messrs. Goddard and Joiner), her cargo plundered and two of her crew

1. C.O. 87/11, 1835, 2nd November, Merchants' Petition to Rendall.
2. J.M.Gray, "History". p.335.
3. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 12th June, Merchants to Rendall.
4. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 12th June, Merchants' letter to Rendall.

detained by Kemingtang who threatened to seize all vessels passing his port of Sarmee, and indeed to detain the "Ora" until his people seized by a Bathurst trader named Saloum Jobati were returned to their home in Niani.[1] Such were some of the complications of the trade. Unfortunately a punitive expedition against Kemingtang's impregnable fortress at Dungassen resulted in humiliating defeat for the troops under Lt.-Governor Rendall and Captain Fraser, who beat a hasty retreat abandoning their canons[2] which the king with much ostentation mounted on his fortress. He had demonstrated his threat to make the Whiteman have some respect for him, even if they had none for any other chieftain.[3] Like any other trade, the Gambia trade required a "pax", but that was not to come till the end of the century when a Protectorate was established and a tribunal instituted in the riverain states to settle disputes of aggression between native subjects and British merchants and traders of St. Mary's. Until this step was taken, all parties took the law into their own hands. Usually a native chief avenged an injury done to him by seizing trade goods in his domain, while the merchants on their part were never slow to petition the Administrator, impressing him with the "necessity of immediately repelling such gross outrage to prevent the contagion spreading ... and convince the surrounding Chiefs that such acts of aggression will not be allowed to pass with impunity ...."[4] As they had the

1. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 28th May, W.H.Goddard to Rendall.
2. C.O. 87/14, 1836, vol.1. 11th January, Rendall to Lord Glenelg.
3. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 21st August, Rendall to R.W.Hay.
4. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 12th June, Merchants' letter to Rendall.


MAP
RIVER GAMBIA
Showing the Countries Bordering on the River
KINGDOM OF SALUM
NYANIE
KINGDOM OF BARRA
KINGDOM OF BADDIBOO
SABBAH
JARRAH
JAMIAH
CARBOO
UPPER COMBO
LOWER COMBO
Jollah Territory
ATLANTIC OCEAN
KEEANO
GAMBIA
Yasou
Barraconda
Bathurst
Banmbang
P. L. Ingram Jun. Delineat.
Chas. Lemon Lith.

Note.—

Administrator's ear in those early years, abortive attempts were often made to redress their grievances, but refractory chiefs proved difficult to bend or break. Kemingtang therefore remained the Warrior of the River till his death in 1842.

Experiences of trade were as wearisome in Portendick as in the River Gambia, for the French Merchants of Senegal were as anxious to exclude British merchants from the gum coast as the British were determined to remove French merchants from the River Gambia. Senior merchants of St. Mary's with their associates in London had formed themselves into the Portendick Company in 1821;[1] and in spite of accompanying frustrations the gum trade was perhaps the most satisfying of the trades pursued from St. Mary's. Here at least they enjoyed Government support to a remarkable degree - extending from the provision of annual customs in bafts, pistols, scarlet cloth, and other merchandise for the Moorish chiefs, to the stationing of a man-of-war between St. Mary's and Portendick during the gum season.[2] Precedent had been found in the conduct of that branch of commerce in Senegal before 1816. Indeed, before his departure from Senegal, MacCarthy had entered into a treaty with the Trazza Moors which proved of a great advantage to British merchants in St. Mary's.

1. C.O. 267/62, 1824, vol.3. 9th February, Matthew Forster to Board of Trade.
2. C.O. 267/56, 1822, vol.1. 21st June, MacCarthy to Lord Bathurst;
   C.O. 267/57, 1822, vol.7. 21st December, Simon Samuel to Colonial Office.

The gum trade was 'big business' and virtually the monopoly of those who could risk substantial capital; competition was therefore limited, and when business was good large profits were guaranteed.

But "a system of fraud and deception .... carried on by buyers and sellers" at Portendick destroyed the confidence necessary to carry on trade,[1] as MacCarthy saw it. The Moors importuned for larger presents, or an advance on account of the next year's customs; and sometimes were rightly suspicious that lighters tried to load gum at night without paying customs. Generally, it was internal strife among the Moorish tribes themselves, purposely instigated by the French, it was believed, which interrupted trade there. In 1824, Matthew Forster, the accredited agent of the Portendick Company commissioned to ship goods required for the purchase of gum and to manage the sale of that article in the London market, complained of French machinations in the Portendick trade. By "bribery and intrigue," French merchants encouraged by their local government "succeeded in exciting the jealousy of some of the Moorish chiefs against those tribes that were favourable to our undertaking ....", so he wrote to the Board of Trade. The object of this as Forster supposed was to ruin the British trade and defeat the objects of the Company;[2] and he would seem to have been supported in this view by a letter from Amer Moctar, king of the Trazzas, who, in a lengthy letter of 1826 to the Commandant of St. Mary's disclosed how the French had

1. C.O. 267/58, 1823, vol.1. 30th June, MacCarthy to Robert Wilmot, M.P. for Lord Bathurst.
2. C.O. 267/62, 1824, vol.3. 9th February, Matthew Forster to Board of Trade.

tried to compel him to abandon trade with the British at Portendick.[1] An attempt had been made under Major (formerly Captain) Grant to remonstrate with the French Authorities in 1823, but the French Governor while giving assurance that he would prevent any further interference from his merchants denied any knowledge of any encouragement given to the natives to oppose British trade.[2]

The Portendick Company, however, was not to be discouraged in their commercial venture, their efforts to extend the gum trade being rewarded by the export of ninety tons of gum in 1823,[3] and over one hundred and forty tons in 1824.[4] In 1826 the estimate was "about one hundred tons annually which produces a revenue to the Mother Country of about £1,200."[5] So flourishing did the trade become, that the Secretary of State proposed that presents for the chiefs ought to be made the responsibility of those merchants who traded to Portendick. Government presents, however, were still being received for the Moors in the 'forties, as a result of petitions submitted by the merchants. They pleaded for the preservation of the gum trade as "a counterpoise to the French factory Albreda", a trade which they could not carry on without the

1. C.O. 267/73, 1826, vol.3. [no date].
2. C.O. 267/59, 1823, vol.2. 3rd February, William Forster to Matthew Forster.
3. C.O. 267/62, 1824, vol.3. 9th February, Matthew Forster to Board of Trade.
4. C.O. 267/61, 1824, vol.2. 23rd August, Captain Courtenay to Lt.-Colonel Grant.
5. C.O. 267/73, 1826, vol.3. 15th May, W.Forster, Ed.Lloyd & others to Sir Neil Campbell.

subsidy of four hundred pieces of baft since all trading vessels to Portendick were obliged to pay customs double that in amount ...."[1] By 1830, the customs demanded by the Moors were found to be so exorbitant that the trade was suspended by the merchants.

When the trade was resumed a few years later, it was the activities of the French which created another crisis. In 1834, Messrs. Pellegrin and Forster despatched the schooner "Rebecca", a vessel of forty-eight tons, and the brig "Governor Temple" of one hundred tons, to trade in gum. The two vessels together carried customs to the value of £1,200, and a supercargo to strike the deal with the Moors.[2] The vessels returned to St. Mary's laden with three hundred and seventy-nine tons of gum valued at £30,000, and their owners prepared to return them to Portendick immediately "as they state there are large quantities of gum still lying there." On the second voyage, they were accompanied by two other vessels, the "Industry" carrying customs of £1000 and sent by Mr. Finden, and the "Matchless" with customs valued at £1,500 sent by Mr. Isaacs. It was while John Pellegrin was ashore at Portendick negotiating with the Moors that a French brig of war, the "Dunois" arrived and challenged the right of British merchants to trade on the shore "at anchor". Pellegrin and John Hughes, supercargo of the cutter "Industry", were held prisoners for four days and eventually transported in the "Dunois" to report to the Governor of Senegal. Their knowledge of French was at least an advantage in their dispute with the Commander of the French brig,

1. Ibid.
2. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 30th August, G.Rendall to R.W.Hay.

especially as Captain Eunson, Master of one of British ships, needed an interpreter to explain to him why his vessel had been seized.[1] The incident developed into a diplomatic complication between the Governments at St. Louis and St. Mary's; Lt.-Governor Rendall made protest to Senegal for the acts of the "Dunois", and forwarded the compensation claims submitted by the merchants.[2] In both the Senegal and the Gambia trade was almost an activity of government, and though its success depended on private enterprise rather than on state aid, Governors and Lt.-Governors concerned for the welfare of their settlements could not afford to ignore overtures made to them by commercial communities.

Protection of trade was in fact closely related to defence, and in Senegal the steam-boat policy on that River was an aspect of naval defence. Merchants of St. Mary's were therefore not only concerned for the protection of their property up the River Gambia, but equally disturbed about the defenceless state of St. Mary's against possible invasion from Senegal in the event of a European war. In the 1830s Governors and merchants were particularly anxious for "an armed vessel" in the River,[3] though it had always featured in earlier petitions. It was the Barra War which had pointed so clearly to the advantages of a colonial vessel in the settlement. Rendall even suggested that a steamer would be even more serviceable and much cheaper

1. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 30th August, Rendall to R.W.Hay, Enclosure of Affidavits of Super Cargoes.
2. C.O. 87/10, 1834, vol.1. 12th August, Rendall to Governor of Senegal.
3. C.O. 267/82, 1827, vol.2. 10th June, Neil Campbell to Bathurst.

to run than a sailing ship "from the facilities of obtaining wood and the amount of freight which might be obtained from the merchants ...."[1] The Colonial Office, however, continued to turn inattentive ears to any representations which might tax the slender resources of the Gambia settlement, or make a claim on imperial funds. Since a vessel was provided for the Governor of the West African settlements, Lt.-Governors were expected to hire vessels from merchants when need arose. This unsatisfactory state of affairs was only put an end to by the recommendations of the Madden Report of 1841 which were adopted by the Select Committee of the House of Commons. In 1843 then the "Wilberforce", an old vessel, was sent from England, but she was ill-suited to the Gambia, where she was wrecked two years later. The "Albert", a condemned vessel and equally ill-suited for the general purposes of the River, replaced the "Wilberforce". It was not, however, till the "Dover" arrived in November 1848 that it was possible to establish regular communications between the different stations on the Gambia; and by allowing her to carry freight and passengers at fixed rates, the Governor hoped trade would be fostered.[2]

1. C.O. 87/6, 1832, vol.1. 23rd July, Rendall to Lord Goderich.
2. C.O. 87/48, 1850, 29th July, Governor MacDonnell to Earl Grey.

By this date, however, the nature of the Gambia trade had undergone significant changes. It was shifting from a diverse trade in Interior commodities to a staple trade in Groundnuts. This was virtually the creation of an agricultural economy under direct Government sponsorship. Governor MacDonnell had been the first official to shake the optimism about the trade of the Interior after his first expedition to the Barracunda Falls in 1849. He then concluded that he could see no near prospect of any great development of commerce between the Gambia and the hinterland; for one thing, the French enjoyed a geographical advantage from their situation in the Upper Senegal, and for another, the frequent wars between Wuli and Bondou were "a drawback to commerce". The main obstacle to the extension of trade in that area was the sad fact that "it does not pay." Not only were its inhabitants and towns of the poorest quality with "nothing to induce a merchant",[1] but this was likely to continue the state of affairs for a long time. It was hardly an encouraging prospect to merchants who had always believed in an 'Eldorado' in the interior of Western Africa.

The groundnut had been cultivated in the Gambia since the days of the Portuguese, but had remained an article for home consumption. It was in 1835 that it was first regarded as an article of commerce, when over forty-seven tons were exported and fetched nearly £200,[2] though a small number of baskets had actually left the settlement prior to this date. In 1837, the

1. C.O. 87/45, 1849, vol.1. 16th September, MacDonnell to Earl Grey.
2. C.O. 87/45, 1849, vol.1. 16th June, MacDonnell to Earl Grey.

colony exported over six hundred tons, two-thirds of which went to foreign states, especially the French ports of Bordeaux and Marseilles, where the nuts were refined into edible oil and the waste product sold as cattle fodder. A quantity of handpicked nuts was usually reserved for the English market, where it was sold as confectionery. In 1841, Dr. Madden reported a growing trade in nuts, and a significant decrease in the traditional exports of gold, ivory, wax, gum ...[1] Indeed the greater industrialization of Britain was to have a direct influence on West African oil products, especially palm kernel and groundnut. The rise in the demand for soap for personal hygiene, the substitution of metal for wooden machinery, and the development of railways caused a steep rise in the use of oil as a lubricant. West African oils therefore found ready markets in Europe since existing sources of animal fats were not only inadequate but sometimes unsuitable.

Both the local Government and the Wesleyan Mission, engaged in the task of civilising the Liberated Africans, saw this as an opportunity for channelling this new labour force to groundnut cultivation. At MacCarthy Island the Mission employed them on its model farms, with a view to showing them a means of earning a livelihood.[2] It was not, however, in the role of producers of the crop, but as middlemen, traders and agents of groundnut-buying mercantile houses that they were to make their unique contribution to the growth of the new trade. Like the old trade in gold and ivory, the groundnut drew a

1. C.O. 267/173, Madden Report, 1841.
2. William Fox, "A Brief History of the Wesleyan Missions", (London 1851) pp.409, 427.

migratory population from the distant Interior to the banks of the Gambia. Companies of Serawulis, Tilibonkas and others who had made up the caravans of earlier years, became the "Strange Farmers" of the River.[1] Arriving in April or May, they attached themselves to the households of chiefs, alkalis and headmen of villages and farmed nuts for a few seasons before they returned to their original homes. By native law and custom, they were granted temporary ownership of land in return for certain fees and services; and without this regular labour force, the exports of groundnuts from the Gambia would have been insignificant. For, contrary to expectation, the Liberated African was reluctant to become a full-time farmer. The new trade then reinforced rather than destroyed that bridge between the merchants of St. Mary's and the Interior which had always been one of the most prominent features of the Gambia trade.

When Strange Farmers were arriving on the River banks, so were the agents and traders from St. Mary's converging on the trading ports for the opening of the "Trade Season". Until the season was over - the nuts shipped and the planters dispersed - the riverain states and their rulers were the focus and life-blood of the Gambia. For a good Trade Season was its objective; on it depended not only its prosperity, but its very existence. The Government at St. Mary's knew it as well as the merchants, and so did native princes - an awareness which resulted in involved diplomacy between Government and peoples, like a game of chess on the riverboard. In this highly skilled

1. C.O. 87/45, 1849, vol.1. 16th June, MacDonnell to Grey.

game, the merchants and the native chiefs were the major pieces; the Government, the planters, the Mulatto and African traders were in general the pawns.

In a sense, it was Government initiative in signing treaties with the more important chiefs which commenced operations. Such treaties aimed at creating safe zones within which traders could operate. To a limited extent, too, the Executive was prepared to make a show of force in fulfilment of treaty obligations. For example, a detachment of troops had been stationed at MacCarthy Island since its occupation in 1823; and, twenty years later, in keeping with treaty commitments,[1] Lt.-Governor Huntley stationed troops in the foreign state of Catabar to restore tranquility and check the meditated attack of Kemingtang. Customs to chiefs were purely utilitarian, so that when a subsidized chief was no longer competent to protect British traders, he was at great risk of losing his annual stipend. By the 'seventies, this same kingdom of Catabar had been overrun, first by one Maba of Baddibu, and after his death by his brother, Mahmoud n'Dare Bah, and the king was no longer in a position to afford protection.[2] Thus on the 6th of October 1873, the Governor of St. Mary's signed a new treaty with the de facto government which suspended the original treaty with Catabar, and increased the stipend for protection from £33.6.8. to £110 per annum.

1. Madden Report, 1841.
2. C.O. 87/105, 1873, vol.2. August, Treaty between H.M. Cooper and Mahmoud n'Dare Bah.

Governors generally thought it was wise to follow events as they occurred and to formulate policy accordingly. In far away Bondou, too, treaties were entered into with its ruler, the Almamy, for the protection of traders.[1] From 1870 till 1889 (when Bondou fell into the French sphere of influence by the delimitation of the boundary), Almamy collected an annual stipend of £50 from St. Mary's. Indeed, the item "Aborigines" which covered all stipends, bore heavily on the annual Expenditure of the settlement. It was a policy supported by the Colonial Office as being efficient and inexpensive; yet it was fraught with difficulties, as Governor MacDonnell had shown in 1849. His view was that "in general, the making of Treaties, except under very peculiar circumstances, is not a beneficial mode of conducting our relations with the natives ... [they] entail permanent obligations binding on us but easily evaded or rendered nugatory by the natives ...." Where there were at least forty-five "petty kings" on every one of whom depended the safety of property and the wellbeing of traders, it could not be a systematic policy which only recognised half their number and bestowed favours exclusively on that half.[2]

The privileged chiefs themselves never intended to forego their right of declaring war, or, of engaging in war as allies, when they signed treaties with the British and accepted stipends from them. While accepting responsibility for British subjects who had been given permission to trade

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 23rd February, Henry Fowler to Major Bravo; C.O. 87/97, 1870, vol.2. 28th October, Acting Administrator Anton to Governor A.E.Kennedy.

2. C.O. 87/45, 1849, 16th September, MacDonnell to Earl Grey.

in their territories, it was not unusual for chiefs to overlook robbery committed on such traders, if it was in their interest to do so. The merchants advocated a show of force in such cases and a demand for reparation in cash and kind; but even where the Governor intervened as mediator, he had no conclusive evidence to show that the traders had not brought on their own misfortune. Governor d'Arcy, a fervent supporter of the mercantile community, sized up the situation in 1862. He observed that the Government was "far more moderate and considerate in [its dealings] with the natives than the mercantile majority of the Council ... [being] aware how powerless the native Authorities are to coerce the evil-disposed and lawless." He complained that his merchants unreasonably expected prompt redress for every alleged act of pillage or assault committed up the River, in contradiction to policy laid down by Colonial Office and transmitted to them.[1] That policy stated categorically that merchants who traded beyond British jurisdiction, that is, beyond St. Mary's, MacCarthy Island, British Combo and the Ceded Mile, did so at their own risk.[2] Notwithstanding such a ruling, men led by the dominating figure of Thomas Brown in the 'sixties and 'seventies were not to defer to Colonial Office niceties. They claimed that British jurisdiction had always extended to the Upper River, and as proof cited ancient treaties of the 'twenties, some of which had never been sanctioned by the Secretary of State.[3]

1. C.O. 87/73, 1862, vol.1. 14th March, G.d'Arcy to Duke of Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/74, 1866, vol.1. 23rd May, Cardwell to Governor Samuel Blackall.
3. C.O. 87/87, 1867, vol.1. 2nd April, Merchants' Memorial to Lord Carnavon.

The merchants were sensitive to Colonial Office indifference to their financial problems, and needed tactful handling by Governors and Administrators. d'Arcy humoured them until he found control was almost passing out of the hands of the Executive into those of a mercantile oligarchy. His successor was to be faced with the extremely difficult task of calling a halt to the process. One contemporary assessment of the St. Mary's merchant portrayed him as something of a snob, belonging to a class "accustomed to be treated by the natives with servile respect..." by virtue of their wealth and position in the town. Quite naturally, many of the African inhabitants of St. Mary's looked up to these men who had been their Masters since they accompanied them from Goree, or since they were apprenticed to them as distressed immigrants. It was therefore extremely difficult for this privileged group of Europeans to reconcile itself "to the pillage and assault made by the same people [Africans] simply because they happen to reside a few miles up the banks of a River, where the British have no jurisdiction."[1]

John Whitford, writing in 1877, confirmed this view of men "afflicted with vanity". He saw them as petty monarchs waited upon by crowds of servants in St. Mary's, but frustrated to discover they were "very small potatoes" when they returned to London on their annual summer visits. Refusing to associate with shopkeepers, they preferred to live "as princes" in the West End of London, where they incurred substantial debts.[2] Allowing for exaggeration, it is nevertheless a picture which must be looked at

1. C.O. 87/73, 1862, vol.1. 14th March, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. John Whitford, "Trading life in Western & Central Africa", (London, 1877) pp.21 & 22.

seriously against the background of the River Gambia trade. Their extravagant living both at home and abroad may well have been a major contributary factor towards insolvency and final bankruptcy, likewise to the struggle between them and their African agents and traders. Further, as competition in the field grew among the merchants themselves, they were more likely to take bigger risks which inevitably involved their traders in debt too. Groundnut harvests fluctuated to such an alarming extent in the nineteenth century, causing such hardship to the private merchant, that it was not surprising that circumstances forced him to liquidate his debts at the expense of his employees.

Besides the European merchants, Mulatto, Wolof and Mandingo factors, and a handful of European agents, conducting business from twenty-three factories in the River composed the trading community in 1841 when Dr. Madden visited the settlement.[1] The Wolofs were not only important as traders but as shipwrights and sailors of river craft. In such vessels they conveyed rice and corn (bartered for British manufactures in Saloum and Casamance) the property of their European employers to the factories to launch the Trade Season. Factories were in reality merely huts hired from the local alcades and used as store houses;[2] and the apparent simplicity of the barter trade which ensued was misleading, for it was a complicated snow-balling process, or a net flung far beyond the banks of the Gambia itself. With "pagnes",[3]

1. Madden Report, 1841.
2. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 9th November, d'Arcy to Blackall.
3. "pagnes": Narrow lengths of cloth,"manufactured from cotton grown in the country, by the native weavers, and dyed by the women from indigo..." G.d'Arcy.

the traditional currency of the time, the producers paid for the foodstuffs on sale from June to September, for this was the rainy season and food was short. In November when the nuts were harvested, the factors in turn bought the crop together with some wax and hides with the same "pagnes". This, however, was not the full extent of the barter trade, for at the height of the Trade Season, the factories were also stocked with British manufactures - guns, gunpowder, Madras headkerchiefs and rum - and what the farmers could not exchange for crops was credited to them till the next Season.[1]

The credit system, as Dr. Dike has shown, was a West African phenomenon.[2] In the early years of the groundnut trade the system worked well, and debtors returned to settle their debts after the next year's harvest. The British merchant, having supplied goods for the trade, confidently took his leave for Europe by the June Mail boat, entrusting the conduct of trade to his employees; he was only to return to St. Mary's in November.[3] In short, the credit system depended very largely on mutual confidence for its operation and success; and once the native states were ravaged by war, not only were debtor-farmers frightened away from the banks, but war caused abuses and corruption to creep into the system. Exorbitant prices were charged for goods in the River, but it became almost impossible to collect debts.

1. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 9th November, d'Arcy to Blackall.
2. K.Onwuka Dike, "Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885", (O.U.P., 1956).
3. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 9th November, d'Arcy to Blackall.

This was how the French merchant with his much simpler system of buying nuts for cash avoided the predicament of his rivals in trade, and continued to monopolize the Gambia market.[1] Here then was a factor which complicated and aggravated the River problem - a growing competition from French merchants, no longer operating from Albreda, but from St. Mary's itself and beyond it to the far reaches of the Gambia. The change had come with the signing of a Convention by Britain and France in March 1857 by which Albreda was exchanged for trading rights enjoyed by Britain in Portendick since 1815. It also conceded to French subjects free access to the Gambia for purposes of commerce, and allowed French vessels free navigation of the River subject to the same duties, tolls and regulations as British vessels.[2] The effects of such liberal terms were distinctly harmful to British merchants, who, through their Members in the Legislative Council of the colony, and through memorials to the Secretary of State, protested against them.

Thomas Chown, one unofficial member, described the Agreement as "neither more nor less than dispossessing us of what I term our birthright..." W.H. Goddard added that their feelings were not that of "petty jealousy, but of indignation and sorrow to find that the repeated representations of us [British subjects] who have passed our lives, expended our best energies and hard-earned resources in this unhealthy climate should be disregarded, while that of a few Foreign subjects seeking to profit by our dearly bought

1. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 14th May, Merchants' Memorial to Governor O'Connor; C.O. 87/69, 1860, 24th May, d'Arcy to Duke of Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/106, 1874, vol.1. 7th March, C.H.Kortright to Sir Samuel Rowe.

experience are eagerly and promptly attended to and regarded..."[1] Edward Bocock, the third member, being prevented from attending Council on grounds of ill health, sent his objections to the Governor; and all three tendered their resignations in utter despair of the hopelessness of their plight. Goddard, who could boast of forty years' service as Sheriff and Magistrate, explained his action caustically: "I find it useless to come here," he said, "sit and lose my time when Laws are made and come out from England for this Council to give force and effect to ...."[2]

Unfortunately for the British merchants they were fighting a losing battle against formidable opponents to their monopolistic tendencies. Both Governor Smyth O'Connor and Colonial Office officials were convinced of the benefits of free trade. The former believed that "the more the River is opened to legitimate competition, will commerce and civilization progress. The monopoly of a few large Houses was profitable to them but prejudicial to the mass of the population ...."[3] The Governor hoped to encourage native traders and advance Liberated Africans by widening the commercial hierarchy. He was, however, not being realistic when he accused the merchants of ~~the~~ raising the French "to an imaginery elevation which in reality they do not possess or deserve ... [being] very insignificant both with respect to enterprise and capital as compared with the British ...."[4] Suffice it to

1. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 19th August 1858. Minutes of the Legislative Council.
2. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 19th Aug. 1858. Leg. Co. Minutes.
3. C.O. 87/68, 1859, vol.2. 27th June, Private letter of O'Connor to Sir George Barrow.
4. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 19th Aug. 1858. Leg. Co. Minutes.

say that in another generation a considerable proportion of the trade of the River had passed into French hands.

Sympathy is surely due to the merchants of St. Mary's, for they had been shabbily treated by the Colonial Office. This was hardly the arrangement they had hoped for when as early as 1826 they had delegated one of their number, Nathaniel Waterman, to call at Goree on his way to England "to ascertain the opinion of the French Authorities on the subject of exchanging the privileges of Great Britain connected with the Gum trade at Portendick, for the French Settlement at Albreda ...."[1] At this time that trading station was fruitful ground for disputes between officials and merchants, and was a barometer of mercantile relations with the Government; for it was not every Governor who supported local commercial prejudices, not even when they were directed against French merchants. The 1857 Convention was already a pointer to possible British policy in future Anglo-French relations in the settlement.

O'Connor's policy of free trade for all in the Gambia was logically questioned by Thomas Chown, one of the most successful merchants in the trade. He demanded to know - "Where is the field of this boasted operation for Free Trade and competition?" Then he proceeded to show the limitations of the Gambia market, and the advantages enjoyed by French merchants in France which made commercial competition with them unfair and unprofitable.[2] Chown was in effect reiterating what the whole mercantile body had incorporated in a

1. C.O. 267/73, 1826, vol.2. 24th August, Neil Campbell to Lord Bathurst.
2. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 19th Aug. 1858. Leg. Co. Minutes.

petition nearly five years before. This had shown that the market for nuts in Europe was France, but that differential duties of 20 francs per ton levied on foreign vessels at French ports in effect gave French vessels the carrying trade from Gambia.[1] Further, they feared that British manufactures might be easily replaced by much cheaper French goods as a result of the subsidy on manufactured goods enjoyed in France. More perspicacious in mercantile affairs than the Head of the administration, they predicted a transfer of the whole trade from the Mother-country to France, and that the Gambia would simply "become a French colony under a British flag."[2] They were very nearly right too.

Though the Convention struck a deadly blow at British enterprize in the River, it was favourable to the planter who benefited particularly from the introduction of cash in the River. One merchants' memorial bemoaned the "great loss and prejudice" to British trade in goods, when farmers, who formerly "never took anything else in exchange for their produce but manufactured goods, now, however, —— insist upon getting cash, and we must agree to give it to them or lose the trade."[3] A gloomy pessimism overcame the magnates of St. Mary's, at the very time when Albreda infiltration was taking on a new and more dangerous form. In 1862 Chown could stand it no longer, and he retired to London, leaving behind his young son to act as his

1. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 14th May, Merchants to O'Connor.
2. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 11th June, Merchants' Memorial to Newcastle.
3. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 14th May, Merchants to O'Connor.

agent in the Gambia for the time being.[1] Edward Bocock was dead.[2] Goddard decided to stay on. Even Thomas Brown had attempted withdrawal from the trade in the 'fifties, but fiercer competition in London had compelled him to return to his business in St. Mary's.[3]

There was good reason why merchants tried to perpetuate the trade in barter. With all the risks involved, all Governors agreed that large profits were made, not improbably by overcharging and foisting inferior products upon the natives. Their concern that the cash trade would oust barter from the market catastrophically was exaggerated, for the natives on the banks of the River, and those from the Interior, were to continue to maintain their preference for British manufactured cottons for a long time to come. So aware of this preference were French merchants, that even before the Convention was signed they had begun to send their vessels to London to load with English manufactures.[4] Cash certainly had its attractions, especially to those from long distances in the Interior. Simply put, it was much less cumbersome to carry away cash than goods if one had to walk hundreds of miles home; so it paid the Strange Farmer to wait till factories nearest his home were reached before he exchanged his cash for goods.

Thus factories in the Upper Senegal like Galam, and others on the Geba and Nunez did a roaring trade from these homeward-bound travellers. St. Mary's was not ignorant of what was happening; and describing the influx of

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 9th April, Thomas Chown to Earl Granville
2. C.O. 87/67, 1859, 31st March, Newcastle to O'Connor.
3. C.O. 87/71, 1861, 24th April, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
4. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 14th May, Merchants to O'Connor.

trade at Galam, one petition observed that the itinerant farmers "dispose for their manufactured goods to the French traders at that place, the same money they received from French traders in common with us on the banks of the Gambia ..."[1] There were other attractions of cash, for silver coins delighted their womenfolk, who melted them into jewelry or hoarded them. As a result "commerce was in fetters", for coins were not always returned into the channels of trade so as to increase the effective volume of trade.[2] Yet it remained a fact that the growth of French influence in the River was accompanied by an increased circulation of the French five-franc piece. This coin had in 1843 been made legal tender at the rate of 3/10½ sterling.[3] The Blue Book of 1868 reported that it had entirely superseded barter in the River,[4] though this surely must have been inaccurate for that date. Nevertheless, by 1880 this coin formed 85% of the total coinage in circulation in the colony.

1. Ibid.
2. Allan McPhee, "The Economic Revolution in British West Africa", (London, 1926).
3. C.O. 87/107, 1874, 4th June, C.H.Kortright to Governor A.E.Kennedy.
4. C.O. 87/93, 1869, vol.3. 4th August. Admiral Patey to Sir A.E. Kennedy.

After the mid-nineteenth century, economic and political forces combined even more effectively than hitherto to undermine relations between the communities in St. Mary's, and thus to hinder trade. It will be shown later how many years of tension and frustration were concomitants of wars which raged in the River states for the rest of the century. In spite of unrest and violence, withdrawal of the troops from MacCarthy Island began in 1865 in implementation of Recommendations made in Colonel Ord's Report;[1] and the Colonial Office laid down clearly that "Her Majesty's Government cannot authorise the Colonial Government to interfere by force of arms for the purpose of putting an end to the Native Wars which are the main obstacles to the improvement of trade ...." The Governor's role was to be one of mediator and "by counsel and persuasion to induce the contending chiefs or tribes to make peace."[2]

The Governor of the 'sixties was Colonel d'Arcy whose desire to interfere in native politics on the side of chiefs in treaty relation with the British Government was supported by a large body of merchants. Any interruption of the groundnut trade, especially in such areas as Baddibu and Saloum which produced the best and largest quantities of nuts in the River, was naturally regarded as a direct threat to their business. The Government was no less concerned when threatened with a probable loss of revenue from the groundnut export duty. But the employees of the merchants - ex Goree Wolofs and

1. C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. 19th January, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
2. C.O. 87/117, 1881, Earl Kimberley to Merchants' Memorial of 21st July 1881.

urbanised Mandingos whose ranks had now been filled out by Liberated African middlemen felt differently towards the belligerents in the River where they did business. These subordinates were beginning to present a united front in self defence against an unhealthy alliance between the Executive and the leading merchants.

It was unfortunate for Liberated Africans that they made their emergence in the River trade at a time when, as they themselves described conditions, the River was "in an unsettled and shocking state from plundering and kidnapping...." The natives they thought "not only ignorant, but naturally wicked; they fall upon any trader they may have ill-feelings against, and without cause ...."[1] The Liberated African himself was a disruptive element in a situation already highly charged, and was easy prey of any native who felt inclined to take revenge for past injuries suffered at the hands of St. Mary's inhabitants. He was faced with greater problems of adjustment in the River environment than either his Wolof or Mandingo associates. Barriers of religion and language divided him from those among whom he conducted trade. Further, he almost demanded preferential treatment from the Colonial Government by virtue of his past history. In a letter to the African Times in 1864, traders from this community asked a pertinent question: "Why should they after being liberated, settled and called British subjects, be left entirely into the hands of heathens, to be ill-treated, beaten, and wounded,

1. C.O. 87/80, 1864, 6th September, Memorial of African Traders to Newcastle; copy of Memorial published in the African Times, October 1864.

without anyone to give them redress, for the want of protection ..."?[1]

The thorny problem of protection for traders was not a new feature of trade, though it now assumed graver proportions since British subjects were in physical danger from persons outside the control of British Courts. Opinion expressed in St. Mary's or London must therefore be studied against a patchy backcloth of claims and counter claims, threats, violence and destruction. The wars proper apart, what hindered the smooth running of trade was the far from satisfactory Alcade-Trader relationship. In 1860, one Thomas King, a Liberated African, begged the Governor to enquire into a robbery he had suffered that his goods might be returned to him. The value of the goods only amounted to £37.10., but often bigger sums were lost under similar circumstances. King reported that he had proceeded up a creek to exchange goods for produce at a place called Gambool. "Previous to my paying the custom I first enquire whether this man is the right person to receive the custom .... After I done so they gave me no chance to trade, they fell upon me and take all my goods .... Upon enquiring for what reason I am treated in this way they said that a French trader resident there insist upon them to drive me away from the place ...." [sic].[2] Numerous letters in the same vein harassed a Governor whose hands were virtually tied by Instructions from Home and who had no means of compelling natives to make reparation except by moral influence. In desperation d'Arcy recommended a

1. Letter of African Traders in African Times, October 1864.
2. C.O. 87/69, 1860, 9th March, Thomas King to d'Arcy.

demonstration of a man-of-war in the River when in 1863 a case of assault and robbery was reported by another Liberated African entrepreneur, by name Thomas Johnson. His object, he said, was to show such Africans "that the Government makes no distinction of class or colour when there is a wrong to redress ...."[1] It was, however, not Government policy under d'Arcy to advocate protection for these men, who were generally suspected of duplicity and dishonesty, of giving support in the wrong camp in the wars, and worse still, of indulging in a trans-continental slave trade.[2]

With or without Government support, the African community was by the 'sixties sufficiently articulate to make its voice heard in London. In memorials to the Secretary of State and in numerous letters to the African Times, African traders pleaded for some understanding of their unappreciated, and yet indispensable, services in the River. They argued that merchants who barely went beyond the limits of Bathurst were hardly in a position to assess conditions in the riverain states. Traders took goods on credit for sale; the merchants "only expect their goods or the value for same in produce as payment for the amount received, whilst our lives will be in danger, since we have no Government protection",[3] they complained. It was to secure their own safety in the states that the traders found it politic to temporise; and for this Governor d'Arcy accused them of prolonging the war by supplying the

1. C.O. 87/76, 1863, 12th January, d'Arcy to Commander Wildman, R.N. of H.M.S. "Philomel".
2. C.O. 87/80, 1864, vol.2. 25th September, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
3. C.O. 87/80, 1864, vol.2. 8th September, Traders' letter to d'Arcy.

rebels with all the guns and gunpowder they needed. It was obvious, however, that the solution of this problem lay in the hands of the merchants who were the suppliers of all articles of trade to their traders. While Government policy remained negative in the River, so long were traders compelled by circumstances to make their own choices, preference being given to any autocratic ruler who could impose law and order and bring some system into the exaction of customs.[1]

Until the establishment of a Protectorate, they were to continue to complain against unjust exactions on one hand, and the equally unreasonable demands of their employers on the other. This multiplicity of taxes which proved the ruin of the trader was given full publicity in the African Times: On arriving in the River at the beginning of the Trade Season the trader was obliged "to pay customs to the Chief before trading £6, Chief's messenger 12/-, Alcade at trading port 60/-, besides extras ...."[2] Such extras might include any goods in the trader's store which the local ruler fancied. Often, customs were taken in gunpowder and other merchandise; and over and beyond these, 4% was charged on all business transacted.[3] The trader's grievance was that in spite of fulfilling his own part of the agreement with native authorities, he was still at risk of having all his goods "burnt, robbed, sunk accidentally,"[4] thus saddling himself with an enormous debt of

1. Letter by a Liberated African Trader to the African Times, published May 1864.
2. C.O. 87/117, 1881, vol.2. 28th June, "Stand-Bye" to African Times, forwarded by C.Fitzgerald to Lord Kimberley.
3. C.O. 87/117, 1881, vol.2. 28th July, "Junius" to African Times - forwarded.
4. "Stand-Bye" to African Times, 28th June 1881.

several hundred pounds. Salum Jobarty, formerly a trader of Messrs. Forster and Smith, writing to W.H.Goddard, then agent for the firm, was "weary of talking and preventing the Chief people of taking and spoiling Whiteman's goods ... the Chief people always to thief and hard begging from the poor traders ...."[1] [sic]. In a society which accepted begging and lavish giving as social forms, the pursuit of business was hazardous, but African traders had to take the risks attached. Helpless as pawns in the commercial contest, year by year they aroused indignation from the natives while they sank deeper into debt with their employers at Bathurst. It became an intolerable situation when they found they were losing nearly all real property in St. Mary's in payment of trade debts, which they believed were incurred through no real fault of their own.

The operation of a system whereby it was alleged that goods were "charged at an enormous rate of 200% to 300% above the invoice price",[2] was to keep these middlemen perpetually dependent upon their employers. Even the French cash trade had repercussions on their transactions, for farmers who might otherwise have settled debts by offering nuts in payment were tempted to sell those nuts to French agents for cash. As Chown put it in a letter in 1870 - the farmers "sold the produce which in honour and reality belonged to us, and we were left unpaid our debts ...." He failed to add, what was also true, that such bad debts automatically fell on their traders, and contributed very largely to a widening gulf of bitterness and misunder-

1. C.O. 87/69, 1860, 9th March, Salum Jobarty to W.H.Goddard.
2. "Stand-Bye" to African Times, 28th June 1881.

standing between merchants and their dependents. The British merchant still saw himself as the mainstay of the River trade and regarded the French as "parasites". For he alone risked large amounts of goods for the trade, thus rendering substantial help and support to the farmers during the rainy season.[1] His French rival, on the other hand, pursued a totally different system of trade, preferring for many years to concentrate commercial enterprise in St. Mary's and its vicinity - Combo and the Lower River. Where one became deeply involved, the other made profits with a minimum of complication and frustration. The Blue Book of 1868 gave official recognition to the changes that had occurred in the economic structure of the settlement in its statement that the "French merchants are now as numerous and influential as the English, and the rapid improvements they are making bespeaks the prosperity of their undertakings."[2]

In world markets, however, groundnuts never enjoyed the same status as palmoil, which in 1870 was fetching as much as between £34 and £44 per ton.[3] In the same period, the price of nuts fluctuated between £8 for undecorticated nuts and £18 for decorticated nuts;[4] and competition from Indian beni-seed in

1. C.O. 87/98A, 1870, vol.3. 30th July, Thomas Chown to Lord Kimberley.
2. C.O. 87/93, 1869, vol.3. 4th August. Admiral Patey to Sir A.E.Kennedy.
3. Dike, "Trade & Politics", p.198.
4. "Advocatus" to the Bathurst Observer, 8th May 1884; Messrs. Radcliffe & Durant's African Produce Report in Bathurst Observer, June 1883.

the 1880s was to subject the price to even greater fluctuations.[1] Merchants everywhere adjusted their buying price from the producers according to a fluctuating world price, which no native producer in the nineteenth century was either likely to understand or accept. In 1882, the Gambia exported 25,000 tons of nuts,[2] about the same volume of trade as the Niger Delta of the 1870s. Yet there was great disparity in the value of the two trades; one required elaborate and extensive establishments and personnel - "sixty large trading establishments owned by some twenty Scottish and English firms [employing] ... about 2,500 Europeans and Africans (British subjects)...."[3] The other was controlled by a few mercantile houses employing a few hundred traders and clerks. In any event, Gambian nuts were overshadowed by the much better quality Rufisque and Kayor nuts of Senegal which brought higher prices in the European market.[4] While Baddibu, the best producing groundnut area in the Gambia, was torn by wars, the exports of the settlement were seriously affected. In 1887, for example, exports had fallen to 3000 tons.

Thus world prices directly impinged upon the Gambia economy, aggravating group relationships at a time when those groups were becoming less interdependent than they had been in the earlier decades of the settlement.

1. C.O. 87/126, 1885, vol.3. 13th October, A.Moloney to S.Rowe.
2. Statistical Tables 1882-4, p.378, H.A./113 Great Britain (I.C.S.)
3. Dike, "Trade & Politics", p.198.
4. C.O. 87/126, 1885, vol.3. 13th October, Moloney to Rowe; "Trade & Revenue" in Bathurst Observer, 23rd January 1883.

Perhaps strained relations were worsened more by continuous disputes over the price and the size of the bushel than by any other single factor in the River. It was generally agreed by merchants and producers that the groundnut price should be 2/- per bushel of 15x15x15;[1] but there were numerous variations both to price and measure. The size was usually fixed between Alcade and trader when the latter paid his custom at the beginning of the Trade Season, especially as many producers would not sell nuts except by a basket of their own making. They, however, always demanded a fixed price for a fixed measure irrespective of the quality, that is the weight, of the nuts or of world prices.

Disagreement on these issues produced a variety of results. Inevitably there were brawls between traders and producers, such as the incident at Pacally in the Jarra country in 1882 when the youngmen of the village assaulted a young Mulatto trader, one Edward Evans, whose crime was that he was trying to carry out the instructions laid down by the merchants of Bathurst. They had arbitrarily imposed a new measure of their own - 16x16x16 - without previous consultation with the alcades.[2] Not that consultation over price ever bore fruit, for four years later, owing to the falling off of the trade in the world market, Administrator Carter, at the request of the merchants, mediated between the parties. The producers on that occasion simply told Carter that they would rather eat the nuts than sell at the price offered - 1/- for a bushel of 14x14x14; and they proceeded

1. C.O. 87/118, 1882, vol.1. 10th March, V.S.Gouldsbury to C.H.Kortright.
2. Ibid.

to do this. In a despatch to Sir Samuel Rowe, the Governor-in-Chief, Carter expressed the opinion that "the merchants have committed an error in policy in reducing the money value of a nominal 'bushel' - there has always been a certain elasticity in the dimensions of the groundnut measure ...", he pointed out, "but its value has for sometime remained at two shillings ...."[1] The merchants in retaliation decided to suspend the trade, presumably with the result that outstanding debts remained unsettled, and confidence between employers and employees was not improved.

Middlemen also had their own grievance against the local price of 2/- per bushel of 28 lbs., at which merchants received produce in Bathurst. This they argued was underpayment for produce that cost them 2/6 to 3/- a bushel to buy and transport down the River. Transportation expenses from native towns to river ports and on to Bathurst were estimated at 6d. a bushel.[2] Eventually, recourse had to be made to the law courts; and thus both the administrative and legal machinery came to be closely bound to the commercial activity of the settlement.

Before 1873, the crude punishment for debt was imprisonment without trial; but in June of that year, as a result of official pressure from London responding to the distress of debtors in the Gambia, especially expressed in petitions from gaol, an Ordinance for the abolition of imprisonment for debt was passed. It was Fitzgerald of the African Times who had brought the issue before the Colonial Office. He questioned whether

1. C.O. 87/126, 1886, vol.1. 22nd January, G.T.Carter to Samuel Rowe.
2. C.O. 87/117, 1881, vol.2. 28th July, "Junius" to African Times.

the treatment meted out in the Gambia was "consistent with British Institutions and Laws, that these men should be so entirely at the mercy of their creditors, as to be without any legal means of relief, but be liable to be kept in prison until Death brings them release ...." A change in the system, he emphasized, could only be initiated by the Secretary of State himself, for it did not seem likely that the Authorities in the Gambia could do it.[1]

There had always been solid mercantile opposition to any relief for debtors. In 1865, d'Arcy had introduced a Bankruptcy bill (modelled on that of Hong Kong and Sierra Leone) into the Legislative Council, because he thought it "contrary to justice and humanity, that any man should be incarcerated without having an opportunity of stating his whole case in a public court."[2] So vigorous was the opposition led by Goddard that the bill had to be withdrawn. It was indication of the strength of mercantile pressure that the whole question was shelved for nearly a decade until the desperate voices of traders in gaol brought it once again under the public eye. Once again merchants protested against any Ordinance that might relieve the situation, and arguing that a fraudulent debtor "keeps what property he has in adjacent native countries beyond the jurisdiction of our Courts, and having his personal liberty secured, sets his unfortunate Creditor at defiance."[3] There were indeed many evil-disposed persons engaged in trade, but not even

1. C.O. 87/106, 1873, vol.3. 1st March, F.Fitzgerald to Lord Kimberley.
2. C.O. 87/82, 1865, 18th May, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
3. C.O. 87/117, 1881, vol.2. 21st July, Merchants' letter to Lord Kimberley.

the honest trader was given a chance to prove his worth by the vicious circle of highrate of charges for manufactured goods, exactions and losses in the River, low prices for produce brought down to Bathurst, resulting in enormous debts. As the African Times again had put it in 1868: The result of the system was that "the unfortunate trader is always in debt to the merchant - is hopelessly his slave ...."[1] Though it took numerous letters and petitions from the merchants to move the Colonial Office, in 1882 the Secretary of State authorised the necessary alteration to the law which had merely abolished imprisonment for debt,[2] without replacing it by a Bankruptcy Ordinance to punish fraudulent debtors. It proved that when pressure was exerted jointly by Governors and merchants it was quite likely to overcome the most united African opposition.

It was shortage of capital that prevented African middlemen from becoming entrepreneurs in the groundnut industry, which required fairly substantial capital either in ready cash or in manufactured goods. A few enterprising Liberated Africans did launch out on private business of their own; but it was the regular appearance of steamships providing cheap freights after 1852 which "had an electric effect on West African trade."[3] It immediately increased the nucleus of African entrepreneurs. In St. Mary's, African traders continued as agencies in the staple trade but encouraged their

1. Editorial - "Debtors' Relief Ordinance" - African Times, September 1868.
2. C.O. 87/118, 1882, vol.1. 1st July, E.W. to Mr. Ashley (C.O. Minute); 2nd June, Francis Smith to V.S.Gouldsbury.
3. Dike, "Trade & Politics", p.114.

womenfolk to import kola nuts wholesale from Sierra Leone. The voyage being short and deck passages reasonable, many women conducted business between Bathurst and Freetown with great facility, purchasing their own blies[1] of Kola and returning to retail them in their own small shops in Bathurst. Indeed a growing body of clients and petty traders came to depend on these women for employment. It was fortunate for them that they faced no competition from the European merchant who regarded the kola trade as purely an internal trade which was best left to Africans. He was satisfied as long as the new class of entrepreneur made its contribution to the revenue in kola duty. By the late 'eighties, profits from kola were being made available for imports of manufactured goods direct from Manchester and Liverpool; and it was by such means that Africans came to participate in the groundnut trade as merchants in their own right.

Only a minority of African entrepreneurs ever attained economic independence, but however small the nucleus it was significant because for the first time in the history of the settlement, European merchants were faced with African competition in the export trade. Hitherto commercial rivalry had been limited to British and French merchants, and while houses like Forster and Smith (now bought over by Lintott and Spink, also of London) dominated trade by substantial capital and a fleet of ships, it was not possible for Africans to compete. The appearance of a second steamship company in 1869 further lowered freight and encouraged African entrepreneurs

1. A bly (or "hamper") of Kola weighed 3 cwt. and cost £8 to £11 in Sierra Leone.

to make visits to the manufacturing centres of England for selecting articles for the Gambia trade.[1] Such opportunities for swelling the trade and revenue were welcomed by colonial governors, who, besides economic advantages attached to increased communication with the outside world, expected this to be an educative factor among Africans. Administrator Patey hoped that "the natives of Bathurst and the surrounding country may rise from their present state of apathy, indifference and subjection, to a life of competition, energy and independence."[2] In spite of such encouragement, the volume of trade was relatively small compared with that of other West African settlements, so that it was not profitable for the African Steamship Company to run a monthly or bi-monthly service to Bathurst, as it did elsewhere, unless its vessels were relieved of port duties[3] (which provided a large proportion of the Gambia's revenue) or a subsidy was offered. The uncertainty of shipping was to be a further obstacle on the road to prosperity, and prolonged the dependent status of African traders.[4]

Since many European merchants of Bathurst were themselves private business men with limited capital, and therefore unable to afford their own vessels, they were as concerned as African entrepreneurs for improved sea communication. In general, they took the lead in petitioning the Colonial Office whenever

1. C.O. 87/68, 1859, 20th August, Duncan Campbell, Secretary of African Steamship Co. to Duke of Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/93, 1869, vol.3. 4th August, Admiral Patey to Lord Granville.
3. C.O. 87/68, 1859, 20th August, Duncan Campbell to Duke of Newcastle.
4. C.O. 87/67, 1859, 25th Sept., Commander A.J.M.Croft of the "Athenian" to G.d'Arcy;
   C.O. 87/102, 1872, vol.1. 28th May, Petition of African entrepreneurs to W.H.Simpson, - Administrator.

the Mail service was interrupted, always emphasising the hardship it brought to African business men. In this connection, proximity to Senegal was to be a decided advantage, for it meant that the Gambia settlement was never really isolated. In 1873 the merchants of Bathurst hired a boat by subscription "to meet the French Mail at Dakar."[1] In the 'eighties, there was a fortnightly communication with Europe by the Messagerie Maritimes steamers sailing between Marseilles and Dakar; besides these the steamers of the Woermann line called monthly at Bathurst, and occasionally those of the Compagnie Française (formerly the Senegal Company).[2]

The development of shipping became the backbone of the African trade, almost entirely an external trade, and therefore dependent on overseas transport. The effect of this development was an enormous expansion in trade during which the African entrepreneur emerged. His position in the Gambia was not as secure as in other West African colonies partly because he was working with far smaller capital and partly because of the recurrent problem of shipping. Nevertheless, men and women who had in the 'thirties been entirely dependent on society for clothing, food and employment, were in the 'eighties organising their own modest commercial ventures, side by side with their former Masters. These were British merchants who had been the pioneers of trade in the River Gambia and had survived the vicissitudes of trade through their own resilience, and partly through the sympathy and limited protection extended to them through successive Administrators. By 1888, with the creation of a government independent of Sierra Leone, and with the likelihood of a Protectorate being established in the River in the future, the growing class of entrepreneurs was prepared to step further up the commercial ladder.

1. C.O. 87/104, 1873, vol.1. 3rd April, Thomas Brown to H.T.M.Cooper.
2. C.O.87/136, 1889, vol.2. 13th December, G.T.Carter to Hon.Edward Stanhope. - Administrator.

CHAPTER IV

MISSIONARIES AS EDUCATORS 1820-1882.

Without missionary activity in the Gambia settlement, the process of education would have been delayed and with it the growth of articulate opinion among the African community on St. Mary's Island. For the responsibility of Government was limited to locating and attending to the physical needs of Liberated Africans who began to arrive in the settlement in the 'thirties, no adequate provision being made for their moral and religious welfare. Concern had, however, been shown for this aspect of civilization, and Governor Charles MacCarthy on his visit home in 1820 had applied to missionary bodies in Britain and France for men and women to enter an uncontested field for evangelism and education in the Gambia. The Anglican Church appointed its first chaplain to the troops in the settlement in 1820, but otherwise made no significant contribution to the education of the inhabitants till the 'sixties. A Quaker, by name William Singleton, was the first missionary to arrive in the Gambia and to commence work in Combo in January 1821.[1] This work continued under Hannah Kilham and a band of workers in 1823 but was short-lived. In the same period, Anne Marie Javouhey, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny - a teaching and

1. Ormerod Greenwood, "Hannah Kilham's Plan - 1.," The Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion, vol.4. No.1. (June 1962), p.14.

nursing Order - visited the settlement from Senegal and reorganised the hospital in Bathurst before proceeding to Sierra Leone.[1] It was therefore left to Wesleyan missionaries to build the Christian church in the Gambia.

The Wesleyan Missionary Society had sent out the Reverend John Morgan who arrived in St. Mary's a few weeks after Singleton.[2] The Island being at the time inhabited by a few dozen Europeans with Mulatto and Wolof dependents numbering well under a thousand persons, Morgan had been instructed to commence his mission among the indigenous communities in the riverain states, with the object of spreading civilization in the interior. An attempt was made to commence work at Tendaba,[3] about seventy-five miles up the River, and then at Mandanaree in Combo, eight miles from St. Mary's, and though the local chiefs were friendly and willing to grant land to the missionary, they could not guarantee protection. In spite of policy laid down, Wesleyan missionaries on the spot soon realized that where resources were limited in an unhealthy climate, it was more expedient to use the small nucleus of Christians already in existence as a foundation of the Church than to break fresh ground among nominal Mohammedans in order to produce a nucleus of Christians. Ironically, the history of missionary enterprize in the settlement between 1821 and 1831 was the growth of the church in an urban community almost to the exclusion of rural communities. The need for

1. Christopher Fyfe, "A History of Sierra Leone", (O.U.P. 1962) p.151.
2. The Rev. John Morgan, "Reminiscences of the founding of a Christian Mission on the Gambia", (London 1864), p.2.
3. Morgan, "Reminiscences", p.7. Tendaba (Tentabar) was the place recommended by Sir Charles MacCarthy.

planting the Gospel beyond the coastal fringe was, however, never forgotten.

On first landing at St. Mary's, John Morgan, by his own testimony, was thoroughly overwhelmed by the task which faced him, the nakedness and apparent savagery of the inhabitants causing him considerable disquiet. But far from presenting any resistance, this section of Bathurst society became the missionary's most attentive audience, ready to listen to him for as long as he might desire, "but ignorant all the while as much of the Preacher's object in assembling them, as of the subject of his preaching."[1] Beyond expounding the Gospel to an illiterate congregation, one of the first tasks was to sort out the heterogeneous character of the society. Through contact with the British merchants on the Island, particularly Charles Grant, Morgan had easy access to the Mulatto community.

Grant's mistress was a Senora whose friends and relatives frequented the merchant's home even while the missionary was his guest, evoking from him the comment that such women being "heathens, they seemed to be unconscious of sin from such intercourse with Europeans."[2] Most of them however must have been nominal Christians since they had passed under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Goree and Senegal. These women were a factor to be reckoned with in St. Mary's not only from the economic standpoint as owners of an important labour force, but also as a possible link between missionaries and their domestic slaves. One Mulatto lady whom Morgan described as "half

1. Morgan, "Reminiscences", pp.2 & 6.
2. Ibid. p.9.

Christian and half white," invited him to her home on the South Bank of the River to preach to her slaves for a few days; and on his departure entrusted her nine year old son to him for instruction, and provided him with a passage on her vessel.[1]

In 1825, a Mission House was erected in Wolof Town on St. Mary's Island, and the whole of the ground floor, an area of 37 ft. by 17 ft., was appropriated for a chapel and schoolroom.[2] The nature of missionary work was at first purely evangelistic, the moral and religious aspects of civilization being its concern. While missionaries served the needs of the young - between the ages of nine and thirteen - by imparting a rudimentary knowledge in the three Rs through Scriptural texts, adolescent and adult domestic slaves who were otherwise employed during the day, were provided for in evening classes. Among them was found an insignificant minority group of Liberated Africans in the 1820s.[3] So encouraging were the results that after three years the school provided the Colonial Chaplain with a boy-clerk, since "not a native man could be found who was competent to be his clerk. Another boy in less time became a merchant's clerk.[4]

Generally, missionaries coped remarkably well with the problems of their juveniles; new pupils totally destitute of raiment were "clothed with the

1. Morgan, "Reminiscences", p.109.
2. Rev. William Fox, "A brief history of the Wesleyan Missions", p.369.
3. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.2. 28th June, K.Macaulay to Lord Bathurst.
4. Morgan, "Reminiscences", p.58.

garments which our friends in England had given us for the purpose."[1] Girls were given special attention in needlework by missionary wives, and some orphans enjoyed the special privilege of living in the Mission House free of charge in return for domestic services rendered after school hours. More difficult of solution was the serious clash of Christian teaching with many old founded beliefs and ceremonies, especially those related to the life cycle. The Church would allow no compromise on vital issues such as poligamy and cohabitation; "for example's sake", persons guilty of indulging in such practices could not be accepted as members of the church, nor could the children of unmarried parents - black or white - be baptized until old enough to answer for themselves.[2] How far this rigidity was imposed on backsliding merchants by whom the Wesleyan mission was in part supported financially, it would be difficult to say; though the Rev. William Moister was to assert that he had frequently "to speak in the language of admonition and reproof, from the low state of morals which prevailed in the colony ...." This evidently did not in any way affect their liberal contributions to the mission.[3]

It was, however, to the moral problems of the African community that the missionaries gave their attention, but they soon found that cohabitation was an inevitable result of the economic demands of the society. Indeed, it was the custom for employers to provide their slaves with women who lived with them until they were removed to Senegal for sale. The dilemma of the

1. Rev. William Moister, "Missionary Labours in Western Africa", p.130.
2. Morgan, "Reminiscences", p.68.
3. Moister, "Missionary Labours", p.127.

convert, consequent upon this unsatisfactory practice was aptly put by a victim of the system thus: "Suppose we marry [a wife] Christian fashion," he questioned Morgan, "next week, perhaps, Master will send her to Goree or Senegal, and sell her; I shall then see her no more; then Whiteman's law say I must not marry another while she is alive."[1] Most converts truly acknowledged the conflict between what they called "devil fashion" and "Christ' fashion",[2] and in large measure acquiesced in the displacement of their earlier beliefs and practices. But reaction to the new order of things was yet to come.

As in the Early Church, some of the most devoted to the Cause were found among the class of domestic slaves in St. Mary's, whose response to Christianity was a sharp contrast to the indifference evinced by nominal Mohammedans of the riverain states. Upon them came to depend the spread of Christianity among African groups,and without such intermediaries missionaries would have achieved little of lasting effect in those early years. Only a handful of their 'congregations' spoke any form of English; and so important was the language problem that all missionaries were encouraged to learn a vernacular - Mandinka or Fula - before they reached the field.[3] It was therefore expedient to recruit local staff as Catechist-Interpreters at the earliest opportunity.

It was in their efforts to achieve this that the Wesleyans first appeared as a threat to the social fabric, into which was so closely woven

1. Morgan, "Reminiscences", p.67.
2. Ibid. p.68.
3. Methodist Mission Archives, Bathurst, Gambia. MacCarthy Island Circuit Meeting, 1843.

the institution of domestic slavery. While very little could be done for such slaves in the riverain states beyond British jurisdiction, missionaries, and indeed all Governors, felt that the institution was not to be tolerated in a British colony like St. Mary's. In theory, therefore, any slave who applie to the Governor for his freedom was given a certificate of manumission, though in practice freedom was not easily secured without mediation. Lt.-Governor Rendall attempted to explain the status of such persons on the Island: "They are not slaves, strictly speaking while they are on this island;" he wrote, "but immediately when they leave, they are and may be taken."[1] Anxious though he was to secure the freedom of any who wished it for a moderate price, he did not wish to disturb the domestic pattern of the merchants and the Senoras; for this reason the Lt.-Governor preferred slaves to continue with their masters even after they had purchased their freedom.[2]

Wesleyan missionaries thought differently partly because they believed this policy restricted freedmen, and also because they intended to steer some of these men into the service of the church. They therefore became involved in the task of securing full social rights for members of their congregations, not only by providing financial assistance towards redemption, but by taking active steps to absorb them as evangelists. Without financial aid, from outside, purchasing freedom was a very slow process which often took many years to achieve, for the average slave with a family to support was unable

1. Fox, "Brief History", p.359.
2. Ibid.

to make substantial savings from a weekly wage, of which a half was claimed by his owner. Missionaries brought pressure to bear on the local Government to accelerate and facilitate manumission, and took on the responsibility of petitioning missionary societies in Britain for funds towards this end.

In the 1830s, two of the four local preachers were "tied in the same way," as the Rev. William Fox described their status; and he called upon the Government to "break their chains."[1] His role as intermediary between slaves and Government and masters was difficult and time-consuming. It involved drawing up memorials for a predominantly illiterate congregation, such as the group who had "long had their freedom promised to them, but it has never been granted. They have made several applications to be allowed to purchase it, but in this also they have failed."[2] Efforts in Britain and with benevolent merchants in the settlement brought in funds. Dublin friends provided £50 for redeeming one Pierre Sallah, a convert, and formerly a Wolof mason of Goree. With his master's help (that master was Charles Grant), John Cupidon, a carpenter from the same place, was able to purchase his freedom. Thus both men became assistant missionaries; the latter impressed the Rev. William Moister in the 'thirties for "his consistent deportment, fervent zeal and diligence in his work."[3] Others there were on Fox's list for mission employ as soon as redemption could be effected; William Joof, Amadu n'Gum and John n'Gum were among those commended to the Wesleyan

1. Fox, "Brief History", p.359.
2. Ibid. p.375.
3. Moister, "Missionary Labours", pp.138-139.

Committee in London.[1]

Even before recaptives began to arrive in large numbers, missionaries were asserting that they had achieved a basic level of civilization among their converts, so that the difference "between the natives who made a profession of Christianity and those who still remained in heathen darkness was so marked, that a stranger visiting the place could at once distinguish the character of the people from their personal appearance, and the condition of their dwellings."[2] It was an achievement for which there was cause to rejoice for this was the purpose for which men and women had risked their lives in a tropical climate. Not only had the harvest been fruitful but labourers had been found to share in the trials of the vineyard. It was the emergence of a native agency, whatever its limitations, which brought such satisfaction to the missionaries, and gave them impetus to resume work among indigenous people in the hinterland. On his return home to England, Morgan drew up a scheme for a Fula mission and looked for financial support from Christians and Philanthropists in his circuit in Southampton.

This was not an entirely new venture, for as long ago as 1823 when Captain Grant founded the dependency of MacCarthy Island, Morgan had been invited by the Government to assist in the work of civilization in the interior. For this reason a grant of land had been made to the Wesleyans for missionary activity.[3] Under Charles MacCarthy's influence, the

1. Fox, "Brief History", pp.360 and 367.
2. Moister, "Missionary Labours", p.159.
3. C.O. 267/66, 1825, vol.2. 12th May 1823. Capt. Grant to Governor Charles MacCarthy.

Government never doubted that through this agency its hopes for the introduction of agricultural pursuits and of legitimate commerce would be met, and the conditions of the natives generally improved. Equally enthusiastic were the merchants of St. Mary's who were attracted by the prospect of a possible supply of clerks and traders to extend legitimate commerce and improve their businesses in the River.

Morgan had decided to concentrate his forces in St. Mary's till the church had taken root there and produced its first African missionaries, and when he left the settlement in 1825, no mission had been established among the small community of discharged soldiers in MacCarthy.[1] Having departed from the settlement, Morgan was to devote his energy to the founding of a Fula mission on that Island. The aim was to locate the nomadic Fula tribe (an industrious people under Mandingo suzerainty) on the six hundred acres of land already granted for missionary activity, to establish in their midst civilizing institutions - chapels, schools and agricultural farms - and subsequently to use the station as the spearhead for advance into the interior. It was a carefully organized scheme sponsored by a Southampton Committee under the distinguished patronage of such persons as Dr. Lindoe, "a pious member of the Established Church" who had been interested in accounts of the Fulas of West Africa, the Duchess of Beaufort, and others of "high respectability and well known philanthropy ...." Nor was the Colonial Office excluded, for the plan was submitted to Lord Glenelg for approval and

1. Moister, "Missionary Labours", p.116.

Government protection.[1]

Financial support from the Committee was to the amount of £500 a year, wit an extra £1000 to meet the expenses of a missionary-linguist whose task it would be to translate the Scriptures into Mandinka and Fula.[2] A large number of agricultural tools were purchased and a Mr. Fisher engaged to superintend the concern, for "besides his knowledge of agriculture, he is said to possess considerable skill in mechanism."[3]

In August 1834, the Rev. and Mrs. Dove and a band of African assistants were already on the field, and sending encouraging reports of progress to the Wesleyan Chairman, William Fox, at St. Mary's. From the grant allowed him, Dove had built "a commodious Mission House", and a small chapel at Fatoto, a Mandingo village on MacCarthy. He had also built a school at the Fula town of Buruco on the South Bank, opposite the Island, where "the children are making progress in their learning." This, he believed was making some impression on their parents. So convinced of success was Dove that he misguidedly predicted that Mohammedanism was on the decline.[4] Certainly the MacCarthy Island area was a hub of missionary activity between

1. Morgan, "Reminiscences", p.115.
2. Fox, "Brief History", p.446.
3. Fox, "Brief History", p.445.
4. Ibid. p.363; Moister, "Missionary Labours", pp.195-6.

1833 and 1836. The missionary-linguist, in the person of the Rev. R.M. MacBriar, was attempting to translate portions of Scripture into Fula and Mandinka, and had even secured the services of a native of the River with a "tolerable knowledge of English."[1]

In spite of what seemed like remarkable progress in the hinterland, in May 1836, violent opposition to the mission was exhibited in the demolition of John Cupidon's house by "a mob led by a European."[2] MacBriar himself encountered difficulties from the European residents on the Island "such as had never before been experienced."[3] So Moister described this phenomenon. What had disturbed mercantile-missionary relations in 1836 was never clearly stated, but it may well have been one indication of the generally disturbed state of the River which came to a head in that year with the expedition against Kemingtang. Appeal was made to Lt.-Governor Rendall for protection of person and property of British subjects, and though this was immediately promised and the Commandant on the spot reprimanded for failing to give redress to the injured party, Fox observed that very little was effected in this direction "and we were called for sometime to endure a series of opposition and persecution —

1. Fox described his assistant in compiling a Mandinka vocabulary as the person Mr. MacBriar had employed - "a proper Mandingo .... educated in England ...." This may have been Mohammadu Sisei (Ceesay) of Nyani-Maru who had been sold as a slave. See article by Captain Washington, J.R.G.S. vol. 8. (1838), pp.448-454.
2. Fox, "Brief History", p.399.
3. Moister, "Missionary Labours", p.196.
4. Fox, "Brief History", p.399.

vexatious and unmerited annoyances."[1] It was generally accepted that evil forces militated against the activities of the mission.

It was a view that was expressed five years later when Dr. Madden visited the settlement. In his inspection of schools in St. Mary's he found Cupidon in charge of the Wesleyan school there, and described him as a "coloured man of respectable appearance —— who had undergone some persecution at the hands of violent and arbitrary men a few years back ...."[2] Native agency in the interior had not been accompanied with lasting success, and the transfer of the Cupidons to headquarters for a number of years, after the unfortunate incident, together with the continuation of their replacement by white missionaries (Fox and Mr. and Mrs. Swallow were posted there after the Doves returned home)[2] indicated very clearly the limitations of African agency.

Determined, however, to achieve their objective of civilizing the indigenous peoples of the Gambia, the philanthropists of the Southampton Committee, now known as the London Committee, embarked on a programme of education of the sons of the chiefs of the River, the Fula experiment having almost failed. £1000 had been collected by the Committee,[4] and during Fox's ministry, building operations began and a goodwill mission "to most of the petty chiefs and kings for some hundreds of miles, east, west, north and south of MacCarthy Island" undertaken. The distant states of Bondou and Wuli were

1. Fox, "Brief History", p.400.
2. C.O. 267/173, 1841, Madden Report.
3. Moister, "Missionary Labours", p.196.
4. Moister, "Missionary Labours", pp.197-8.

included in Fox's itinerary, and not even Kemingtang's reputation deterred him from calling on that Warrior and asking for pupils for his school.[1] Once completed, the building remained a white elephant for want of pupils, and so slow was progress generally that the 1846 District Meeting held at St. Mary's recommended that MacCarthy should be reduced to a subordinate station, and new efforts concentrated in the immediate environs of St. Mary's Island.[2]

Plans for the interior had again failed; the 1846 meeting admitted that the civilization department for the benefit of the Fulas had failed, likewise model farms had been abandoned since the loss of the agricultural agent. About the boys' Institution, it concluded that that too had failed, "for we have not now a single student, nor are we likely to obtain one on our present system. Our funds will not allow of our visiting Native Chiefs and giving them expensive presents, as formerly was the case; and —— although they promise to send their children to be instructed, they will in reality do no such thing." Their saddest comment concerned old pupils from whom they had expected great things, but who "have quickly resumed the abominations and fooleries of their heathen homes" on their return to their villages.[3]

In fairness to Wesleyan enterprise in the interior it ought to be emphasised that their aims and objectives in that area aborted not only because of the indifference of indigenous peoples both to the Christian religion and the facilities for education and planned living offered to them, but also because the invasion of Liberated Africans in that period

1. Fox, "Brief History", p.424.
2. Methodist Mission Gambia, 1846, Gambia District Meeting, Resolution 4.
3. 1846. Gambia District Meeting: Recommendation II.

was an unforseen contingency for which all agencies in the settlement were required. Circumstances thus shifted interest from an indifferent community to destitute immigrants whose needs were urgent. It was not only the mission, but all available agencies were called upon to save the situation for the sake of suffering humanity.

Collaboration between Government and mission in the rehabilitation of Liberated Africans produced interesting results. The policy of wholesale marriages, for example, was carried through in good faith - from a belief that marriage would be an integrative factor among a mixed band of immigrants. If marriage failed, the church was there as a refuge for the distressed. Indeed, chapels and Sunday schools and catechumen classes sprang up wherever these recaptives were located by Government - in Goderich Town on the extremity of St. Mary's Island, in Lamin in Combo, in Berwick Town in the Ceded Mile, and of course in MacCarthy Island. Fox described this expansion as "a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit."[2] In one year, the congregation of the main chapel at Dobson Street in Wolof Town had increased from seventy-five to three hundred, so that the building was no longer adequate for its purposes. It was in December 1834 that Lt.-Governor Rendall laid the Foundation Stone for a new building.[3]

1. Fox, "Brief History", p.373.
2. Fox, "Brief History", p.369.
3. Ibid.

For all its expansion in the spiritual sphere, the church in the Gambia remained dependent on the Wesleyan Society at home, for the majority of its flock was little removed from pauperism. Unlike congregations in Sierra Leone which were by this period able to undertake the financial responsibility involved in building projects of their church, Fox could only promise to raise £100 towards the new chapel, while the Society provided £500.[1] In actual fact, £153.10.5. was the sum collected in subscriptions and church collections, to which could be added a further £100 subscribed ten years later for the addition of a gallery.[2] Even with regular contributions from officials and merchants, the District Meeting of 1845 admitted to their being "so poor that we cannot carry out our financial discipline so fully as we would wish." Expenditure for that year was £532.11.11., but Income from local sources amounted to £246.13.8. Nor was the financial situation less desperate in the MacCarthy Island circuit where Expenditure was £521.18.10½ while Income was the meagre sum of £71.19.4½,[3] most of it probably provided by the handful of merchants and traders on that station. Deficits therefore had to be met by bills drawn on the Treasurer of the Wesleyan Society, and without the cooperation of local merchants and African traders, who were ready to make loans to the Chairman and await payment of bills by the Society, it would have been very difficult for the mission in the Gambia to function efficiently.[4] Continuing dependence of the church was simply a reflection

1. Fox,."Brief History", pp.357 & 370.
2. Methodist Mission Gambia, 1835. Circuit Book of St. Mary's.
3. Methodist Mission Gambia, 1845. Gambia District Meeting.
4. 1846, 1850, 1855. Circuit Books.

of the economic dependence of the Liberated Africans who by now composed the majority in all congregations.

It was the local Government which came to the aid of the missionaries in 1848 with the offer of an annual grant-in-aid of £100;[1] for it was the Wesleyans who had almost taken over the Government task of locating recaptives on MacCarthy Island. The mission had become the largest employment agency in the whole settlement, compelled by circumstances to adjust its objectives, its six hundred acres of land and model farms to present needs. In 1836, a number of recaptives were employed as labourers to clear the brushwood, sometimes at the rate of sixty or seventy or even a hundred a day at a salary of 7d. a day. A hundred head of cattle was purchased and used for ploughing the land for cultivation, by which further employment was provided for the people.[2] Corn, millet, indigo, cotton, rice and groundnuts were grown. In fostering groundnut cultivation, missionaries and Africans in their employ were engaged in a revolutionary process which was to transform the economy of the settlement. It was a very real attempt not only to provide employment but to introduce an aspect of industrial education to men who had had no formal education.

The neglect to educate the children of these immigrants was to prove a most short-sighted and disastrous policy. Dr. Madden laid great emphasis on the "mischievous effect of excluding the Liberated African children" from the schools;[3] the extent of their education being the facilities available

1. C.O. 87/45, 1849, vol.1. 16th September, MacDonnell to Grey.
2. Fox, "Brief History", pp.409 and 427.
3. Madden Report.

for learning a trade. The Sierra Leone experiment which had made the teacher as the Manager the responsibility of Government had involved such heavy expenditure that philanthropists, missionaries and the British Government had reacted very decidedly against the concentration of funds on that Group. In 1843, the Colonial Office gave orders to cut down or abolish the Liberated African Department in Sierra Leone, which was then costing the British taxpayer about £12,000 per annum.[1] Thus the Gambia's recaptives failed to receive that sympathy and that financial support from Britain which others had for many years enjoyed in Sierra Leone. The result was that the very process of civilization was delayed, and failure to improve the minds of large numbers of illiterate youths who had arrived in the settlement meant that the very medium of literary language through which opinion was to be expressed for bodies outside the settlement was withheld from them.

Generally, the school population was on the increase in the 'forties; in 1841 Madden had reported ninety-six children in the school in MacCarthy, and one hundred and seventy-two in the schools in St. Mary's and Berwick Town. By 1848 numbers in the former school had risen to one hundred and twenty-one, and St. Mary's to two hundred and ninety-eight, while Berwick Town boasted of eighty-four pupils.[2] Numerical advance at this pace and at the primary level of education was hardly a great achievement for a mission that had been established in St. Mary's for a whole generation. It was true that Wesleyan church government which divided congregations into

1. Fyfe, "History", p.229.
2. C.O. 87/48, 1850, 29th July, G.MacDonnell to Earl Grey.

classes, each under a lay leader was valuable training in responsibility and an aspect of adult education.[1] Yet looking back on Wesleyan labours in the settlement, Governor MacDonnell felt little but regret "that as yet so little should have been effected."

The Governor's conclusion was that policy had been misdirected, and the benevolence of many individuals in England channelled through the wrong Causes; the consequence of which was that far from making MacCarthy Island the gateway to interior tribes, money and energy had been wasted on locating Liberated Africans, who "were a class so entirely inferior in appearance and civilization to many of the surrounding natives, [that very] little was achieved in bettering their appearance and condition."[2] Though obviously a biassed and ill-informed opinion, the condition of recaptives was still not an attractive one. It is significant that the Rev. Henry Badger, the General Superintendent of Sierra Leone and Gambia, accepted MacDonnell's premise, himself calling attention to "a marked inferiority in the intellectual capacity of the natives especially those who are found amongst the Liberated Africans as compared with the other races of the human family."[3] Little did either MacDonnell or Badger know that the future of the settlement would depend in great measure upon the mental and physical energy of this despised community. Efforts of missionaries to improve its status were rather an investment for the future.

1. Fyfe, "History", p.202.
2. C.O. 87/48, 1850, 29th July, MacDonnell to Grey.
3. C.O. 87/48, 1850, 29th July, Enclosure - Education Report by the Rev. Henry Badger to Governor MacDonnell.

Tensions in the church in the generally disturbed period of the 'forties were signs of the maturity of its congregations and African assistants. The latter had, as it were, reached the crossroads in religious experience, when they were no longer willing to be led along the road by white missionaries but asserted their right to choose the direction and determine the pace. It was unfortunate that, without exception, three senior assistants chose the wrong road. Under the circumstances, the point had been reached when the mission was called upon to evaluate native agency; and at almost every District Meeting between 1841 and 1848 it was preoccupied with the moral welfare of its African missionaries. In 1841 the initiative was taken by the African Class leaders of the MacCarthy Island Circuit after their local missionary had been fined five dollars by the Magistrate's court for beating a Wolof woman on the Island. Taking into account the irregular attendance at meetings because "their leader was no good," the class leaders suspended n'Gum for three months, and arranged to lead his classes themselves.[1] Their decision was then forwarded to St. Mary's as a result of which n'Gum was persuaded to resign from the mission. Dissatisfaction with the morals of African agents came to a head in 1848 when both John Cupidon and Pierre Sallah were asked to go.[2] Both had been found guilty of intemperance, the latter particularly censured for having opened a wine and spirit store opposite the mission premises in MacCarthy. He had been in the employ of Richard Lloyd since his suspension from the mission in 1846;[3] and it was the same Lloyd

1. Methodist Mission Gambia, 1841, Minutes of Wesleyan District Meeting held at MacCarthy Island.
2. 31st January 1848. Minutes of Gambia District Meeting held at Bathurst.
3. Ibid.

who was suspected of being at the root of the disturbance in 1836. Nor was this all, evidence of persistently disobeying orders from the Ministers, and of fighting were some of the charges against men who had spent seventeen years of their lives as missionary agents.

These charges did not go unanswered. Cupidon argued that he had left his station without official permission because the Rev. Matthew Godman had flogged his wife, but Godman tried to justify his conduct towards Mrs. Cupidon by citing drunkenly and indecent behaviour.[1] It was a puzzling state of affairs, this evidently recent laxity in moral tone in the hitherto faithful, though small, band of Wolof missionaries, and the rift between it and authority. In the same context, consideration should be given to the reasons for the striking reluctance of other urbanised Africans in St. Mary's to follow in the footsteps of that freed slave group which had offered its services to the mission; and why the mission for its part had made no attempt to give training to its African members of staff. This inadequacy had to be stated in the Madden Report, so were the advantages to be gained from a training programme stressed. Dr. Madden knew that a steady stream of promising lads from the Church Missionary Society school in Sierra Leone was flowing into institutions for higher education in England. He hoped that selected Gambians would also be sent to England to qualify as teachers who would return to run the local schools; but he warned that the "insufficiency of the salary" of teachers in the Gambia would always be an obstacle to

1. October 1846. Minutes of Gambia District Meeting held at Bathurst.

securing the right type of teacher.[1]

Having decided to dispense with the services of local assistants who could not fulfil the requirements of the church of the 'forties, the Wesleyan mission began to recruit trained African staff from Sierra Leone. In this policy it was greatly encouraged by the outburst of missionary zeal from that territory which was not only to be concentrated in the Niger but was to embrace the Gambia too. Thus in 1849, the Rev. Joseph May was transferred to MacCarthy Island circuit. May was "an Aku brought up in European missionary households and in Ajai Crowther's", who had later been educated in the Borough Road school, London, at the expense of English Quakers.[2] He was recognized as an excellent teacher when he returned home; and indeed Governor MacDonnell on visiting his school in MacCarthy Island was "much struck by the progress made by the children as compared with that which they had evinced ... previously." Even adults and elderly persons had shown keen desire for instruction so that a class had been formed for them.[3] May was succeeded by no less a person than the Rev. Charles Knight, also a recaptive who had spent two years at the Borough School, and who was to become the first African Superintendent of the Sierra Leone and Gambia Districts.[4] Thus MacCarthy

1. Madden Report; 1840 Circuit Book:- Assistant Missionaries like Cupidon and Sallah who were also teachers received a quarterly salary of £12.10s.; Assistant teachers received £6.10s. a quarter (female teachers much less).
2. Fyfe, "History", p.214.
3. C.O. 87/48, 1850, 29th July, MacDonnell to Grey.
4. Fyfe, "History", p.398.

Island continued to be staffed till the turn of the century in accordance with a policy to reserve that station for a trained native clergy.

'By this period, however, Roman Catholic missionaries had re-entered the Gambia. In 1849, four priests arrived in St. Mary's and purchased land for the construction of a church and house.[1] They were followed by four Sisters of Charity, who, once they had found a base, devoted themselves "to education, to the assistance of the poor and sick —— receiving orphans and abandoned children into their establishment."[2] For the first time in its history, a boarding school was established on the Island of St. Mary's; it was a free school where the children were instructed in religion and domestic subjects. This mission also depended primarily on funds collected overseas, in particular France, for the maintenance of its social work in St. Mary's. Its programme for free medical treatment in the colony without any kind of assistance from the local Government became a burden on the resources of the mission, causing it to petition for financial aid in 1853. Their spokesman, Baron de Schroeter, based his appeal for a substantial grant of £2000 on his estimate that nearly two thousand of the five thousand inhabitants of the Island were Roman Catholics.[3] This was probably an exaggeration from someone who had to justify his reasons for claiming so much towards mission buildings, staff salaries, and a proposed Boys' school. It was a claim "beyond the resources of the Colonial Chest", which could not

1. C.O. 87/48, 1850, 29th July, MacDonnell to Grey.
2. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 29th April, Governor Smyth O'Connor to Newcastle, Enclosure – 6th February, Baron de Schroeter to Governor O'Connor.
3. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 6th February, Baron de Schroeter to O'Connor.

be met if the Government's own programme for civic development - the building of a hospital, a market, and Anglican church [1] was ever to become a reality.

Education then was not a province of Government but of Voluntary bodies; and while the revenue of the Gambia remained inadequate to meet current expenditure, so long was contribution towards missionary enterprise ungenerous. Typically, the thorny problem of a Native Pastorate, which had become a major issue both in Sierra Leone and Yoruba land in this period, was never given any discussion in the Gambia; though the idea of a self-governing church run by an indigenous clergy was much more the pet theory of the Church Missionary Society than of the Wesleyan mission. In Sierra Leone, for instance, the leaders of the Wesleyan connexion were bitterly opposed to a Native Pastorate which received a government grant from which those outside the Established church could not benefit financially.[2] A trained African clergy, nevertheless, was evidence that the church had taken root, and was proved to be an invaluable instrument of education. Wesleyans had attempted to produce native assistants for evangelism and teaching in the Gambia, but their inability to recruit men outside the 'peasant' class resulted in a stagnant church, which could not be in the vanguard of public opinion even though its place in society was unquestioned.

It was the Anglican church particularly which showed "so little zeal — for the diffusion of knowledge and religion" in the settlement, in consequence

1. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 29th April, O'Connor to Newcastle.
2. Fyfe, "History", p.353.

of which even the chaplaincy was more often than not vacant.[1] There had always existed a garrison school attached to the barracks, with never more than a roll of twenty children and a few adults, "most of them entirely ignorant, and taught by a schoolmaster who is himself but little more advanced in knowledge."[2] Even without adequate funds, Governor d'Arcy was to show in the 'sixties that reorganization and expansion was possible. With twenty-two years' experience in Ceylon, the East Indies, and West Indies where he had been partly responsible for running the regimental schools, he was able to exert influence in the garrison school in St. Mary's which in consequence produced "intelligent N.C.Os" for the benefit of the settlement.[3] If the Anglican church would not make a contribution to education, the army with Government support had become an instrument of education. In this way it began to produce revolutionary forces which marshalled African public opinion against the Government of the 'sixties.

Outside the army, ancillary institutions such as Friendly Societies or Companies had a distinct bearing on the educational development of their members. There were twenty-two such Societies in existence in St. Mary's reported to d'Arcy to exercise such control over members as almost to constitute a threat to the Government.[4] Membership was almost exclusively drawn from the Liberated African community which had received its education

1. C.O. 87/48, 1850, 29th July, MacDonnell to Grey.
2. Ibid.
3. C.O. 87/77, 1863, 16th September, Governor George d'Arcy to Duke of Newcastle.
4. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 21st June, d'Arcy to Cardwell.

in the elementary schools and adult classes of the Wesleyan mission. Significantly, it was not within church groups under the leadership of Ministers and Pastors that public opinion was nurtured in those early years but at formal and informal gatherings in the homes of the elders of the Liberated African community.

Thomas King, for example, a disbanded soldier of the 2nd West India Regiment, and then a small entrepreneur, was the President of what was described as "the African West India Society."[1] In association with the Vice President and Secretary of the Society, Sergeant Raper and John Daniel, a letter was written to Governor d'Arcy explaining that "the Society is not one of a political or commercial nature and as such it cannot and will not interfere with the affairs of the Imperial or Local Government." The letter continued that the "principal object of our establishing this Society originates from no source than that we, considering ourselves as Liberated African having no Father, Mother, or other relations in this colony, have thought it requisite and necessary to combine ourselves together and establish a Society for the purpose of assisting each other."[2]

Another letter from a Joseph Reffell, a recaptive of Ibo descent, indicated that Friendly Societies in the settlement had been formed under Wesleyan Missionary sponsorship during periods of unemployment between 1837 and 1841 when petty thieving plagued the Island of St. Mary's. The Government, therefore, approached the church for a solution to this social

1. C.O. 87/83, 1865, vol.2. 22nd October, d'Arcy to Cardwell, Enclosure 14th October, Letter from the African West Indian Society to d'Arcy.

2. C.O. 87/83, 1865, vol.2. 14th October, African West Indian Society to d'Arcy.

evil; and it was at a church leaders' meeting that the idea of a "Workmen's Club" for mutual assistance was born. The first to be founded was the Ibo Society started in 1842 with a mixed membership, male members paying 1/- and female 6d. a month. It became a moral force in society, other ethnic groups on the Island following the lead by pooling resources in similar associations. So beneficial were the results that "the Magistrates and the merchants returned their kind thanks to the Reverend gentleman ...."[1]

It was not long before other uses were found for these Societies, especially as Mr. Fyfe has shown, as recaptives were not unfamiliar with "religious, political, co-operative, age-group, or vocational" societies in their homeland.[2] Indeed, as early as 1849 the black inhabitants of St. Mary's had found it a useful medium for expressing grievances against the Government.[3] It was here that second and third generation Liberated Africans, who had been fortunate to learn the three Rs at missionary schools in the settlement, excelled as scribes and even as commentators of the political scene. Little wonder that Governor d'Arcy and other officials disliked this younger generation, who, having been "spoilt" by missionary education, was accused of disloyalty, ingratitude towards benefactors who had brought them freedom.[4] The 'sixties provided d'Arcy with ample examples,

1. Joseph Reffell on "The Gambia Clubs Ordinance", pub. African Times December 1865.
2. Fyfe, "History", pp. 171-172.
3. C.O. 87/46, 1849, vol.2. 19th September Declaration of George Chapman before Richard Lloyd, J.P.
4. C.O. 87/71, 1861, 24th July, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

for it was a period of racial tension in the settlement when Africans were making a desperate effort to assert themselves in the society, frequently exhibited in opposition to the Government. These were the people Governor MacDonnell regarded as too "inferior" to benefit from the elementary education made available to them in the 'forties. They had so made use of those opportunities for education as to have begun to question the leaders of church and state and to make their own peculiar demands in the 'sixties.

Expansion in formal education was a feature now of the Gambia; more elementary schools were established, by missionary agency. The Government offered a special grant to the Wesleyans to set up schools in the villages in Combo where disbanded soldiers had been located, in Baccow Konko renamed Newcastle), in Clifton Town ....[1] In the older schools in St. Mary's and the Ceded Mile, expansion was partly encouraged by the influx of refugee children, consequent upon the wars which had dislocated communities in the River, now made available for education which their parents had hitherto refused them. Because of a lack of funds, the Government made no formal provision for their education in the colony, but it encouraged all persons to whom they were apprenticed not only to feed and clothe them but to teach them.

Evidence soon proved Liberated African masters and mistresses to be

1. C.O. 87/69, 1860, 24th May, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

defaulters in respect of the welfare of their apprentices.[1] Though the raising up of "alien" children within a household was in the African tradition, invariably householders used such children as unpaid servants, thus depriving them often of school education. It demonstrated the absolute dependence of educational programmes upon economic forces. A Liberated African woman who was censured for keeping her boy-apprentice from the school at Esau (Berwick Town) only to use him as woodcutter, and starving him besides, gave the petulant answer that "when she has not more to get she cannot go and steal." Nor was she prepared to allow him leisure to study when she could make a living out of his earnings.[2] It was an attitude which d'Arcy could not understand from persons "who of all others in the world ought to be the very last not to do unto others as they have been done unto." So impressed was he by the contrast in treatment given by European masters that he deprived some Liberated Africans of their apprentices and sent them over to the firm of Forster and Smith "where they are well fed, and clothed, taught a profession, and most kindly treated." Other merchants were congratulated for so having cared for their apprentices that "many even now can read and write and speak tolerable English."[3] Long established merchants had been training apprentices in the settlement since its foundation, and had shared with Wesleyan missionaries the earliest problems of educating its peoples.

1. C.O. 87/74, 1862, 25th August, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. Ibid. Fyfe reported a similar pattern of behaviour among the same community in Sierra Leone, see "History", p.270.
3. C.O. 87/74, 1862, 25th August, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

The Blue Book Report for 1862 recorded steady progress: Wesleyans alone were educating 403 children in their schools (223 boys and 180 girls); the Roman Catholics had 105 pupils (55 boys and 50 girls); while the Garrison school, under a civilian headmaster, now showed 40 children on its register (26 boys and 14 girls), apart from a special class of 20 Congo boys newly liberated from slavery. With much satisfaction, d'Arcy concluded that "we have no less a number than 659 little people under instruction in a Settlement numbering 6,000 inhabitants, being little more than 9% of the population, which I cannot help thinking is very creditable to the Government and to the community."[1] In actual fact, the Government was doing very little for educational development outside the small grant to the Wesleyan mission, and a smaller grant of £50 per annum to the Sisters of Mercy.[2] It was d'Arcy's wish, however, to take a lead in education by establishing a Government secular school[3] out of the existing Garrison school, but the revenue of the 'sixties would not bear such burdens.

For private individuals, however, it was a period of growing prosperity and enlightenment, when certain parents in Bathurst began to plan higher education for their sons at the C.M.S. Grammar School in Freetown. It was a school established in 1845 "to provide secondary education for boys from middle-class families," with a curriculum which included Mathematics, Greek, Latin, Biblical and English History, Geography and Music. At first, most

1. C.O. 87/77, 1863, 25th September, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/71, 1861, 24th July, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
3. C.O. 87/67, 1859, 24th September, d'Arcy to Newcastle;
   C.O. 87/77, 1863, 16th September, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

pupils had been subsidized by the C.M.S. but by the 'sixties most of them were paid for by their parents or local benefactors, day boys being charged 4 guineas a year, boarders £15 a year, while Parlour boarders paid extra for the privilege of having meals with the Principal.[1] The Grammar school was a unique institution on the West Coast because of its cosmopolitan character, drawing its pupils from the Gambia, the Gallinas, the Rio Pongas, Liberia, Cape Coast Lagos, Fernando Po, Bonny, the Cameroons.[2] Such a heterogeneous community of picked youths from well-to-do families was bound to produce a particular kind of education based on its distinctive ethos; besides, the immediate environment of Freetown could not but impinge upon the school, exerting influences which were to modify and direct the education of the young.

1. Fyfe, "History", p.237.
2. A.E. Tuboku - Metzger, "Historical Sketch of the Sierra Leone Grammar School, 1845-1935", (Freetown 1935).

It was into this community that the first youths from the Gambia entered in the 'sixties. At what age most of them entered is a matter for conjecture, since there is evidence to show that as late as 1857 one pupil from Freetown was accepted at the age of thirty-two. John Goddard of St. Mary's Island enrolled at the Grammar school on the 10th of January 1859 as Number 315. With that surname he could either have been a Mulatto descendant of one of the merchants of St. Mary's or perhaps a Liberated African youth. Alfred Lewis of Freetown, a younger brother of Samuel Lewis (the first African to be called to the English Bar), entered the Grammar school three months before.[1]

This pioneer was followed a year later by John Bruce,[2] probably the son of George Bruce, Government Pilot in St. Mary's and a man of Yourba descent.[3] As a low-grade Government servant, Bruce was probably earning less than £50 per annum, and may well have received aid from the Friendly Society of which he was a member for the education of his son. Collective responsibility of Liberated African groups for the higher education of promising youths was to be a feature of this evolving community and an expression of their solidarity. Only a few years later they were to pool resources for the purpose of giving Joseph Reffell, (son of Thomas Reffell an Ibo), formerly barrack sergeant and clerk in the military store, a legal education in London.[4]

1. Entrance Register, C.M.S. Grammar School 1845-1935 (Freetown 1935).
2. Ibid.
3. C.O. 87/73, 1862, 7th April, Signatory to address of Condolence to Her Majesty the Queen.
4. Joseph Reffell on "The Gambia Clubs Ordinance", African Times, December 1865.

As was to be expected, Bruce returned to the Gambia with ideas for higher education in England, for the Grammar School was itself a stepping-stone to England for a number of Sierra Leone youths. In 1864, he submitted a petition "to the President of the Committee of the Council on Education," praying to be admitted to the benefits of an English education, for, as he put it, he had been "encouraged to make this application because of his often hearing that there are many good people living in England whose chief desires are to do good for poor Africans, and would take care of them as their own children."[1] The petition was duly forwarded to the Colonial Office but bore no fruit. Consequently, Bruce was still in the colony in 1871, then a dismissed clerk from the Brigade Office.

It was a major defect in missionary enterprise in the educational field that in the Gambia it provided no outlet for the exceptional youth, and left the initiative in this direction to be taken by parents who themselves had had a minimum of schooling. When Gambian youths began to participate in the activities of the Grammar School, this was as far as they could go. The Wesleyans in the Gambia, unlike the C.M.S. in Sierra Leone, seemed to lack contacts - philanthropic bodies in England - by which educational facilities might be opened to members of their congregations. It was partly this ceiling placed, as it were, above the heads of the ambitious which produced that degree of frustration among Liberated African youngmen in the settlement in the period under consideration, and perpetuated a poor quality of education

1. C.O. 87/81, 1864, vol.3. Enclosure, Newcastle to d'Arcy.

in the schools so striking to all visitors to them.

Nevertheless, the Gambia was now caught in a wave of learning, which, like missionary zeal of the 'forties, rose from Sierra Leone and washed the West Coast. Goddard and Bruce were heralds of a new age of higher education. Between 1861 and 1873 the Grammar school enrolled fourteen other youths from the Gambia, among them James Goddard, Jobe Beigh, Joseph Shyngle.[1] It is puzzling that this nucleus of fairly educated men seemed to have made so little impact on educational life in the colony on their return home. Goddard worked for a time as clerk to Thomas Chown before he branched out on his own. Beigh became a clerk to W.H.Goddard.[2] Only Shyngle, whose father was a small entrepreneur, proceeded to England for further education in law. Governor d'Arcy described them as half-educated, sometimes, as youths who had received tolerable education at Sierra Leone, and had returned home to sow dissension in the colony and write scurrilous articles in the African Times.[3] Education then sparked off criticism of a political nature and produced a hostile attitude of officials towards literate Africans.

Missionaries in the settlement continued with the routine task of preaching and teaching and acting as mediators between Government and people when occasion arose, as during the crisis of December 1865 when members of their congregation were suspected of plotting the massacre of all Europeans

1. Entrance Register.
2. C.O. 87/99, 1871, vol.1. 5th May, Sir A.E.Kennedy to Lord Kimberley.
3. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 21st July, d'Arcy to Cardwell.

in St. Mary's.[1] Otherwise, the Wesleyan mission kept out of current controversy and showed a singular lack of opinion on major issues. It would appear that missionary policy so long as it was directed by Europeans was generally to give support to Government policy, and when necessary to bring their influence to bear on disruptive elements in the society. This was not the picture in Sierra Leone. It was not a constructive policy, and hardly reflected the spirit of the recommendations of the 1865 Select Committee of the House of Commons which stated that "the object of our policy should be to encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible more and more to transfer to them the administration of all the Governments, with a view to our ultimate withdrawal from all, except probably, Sierra Leone."[2] It was not in the church but in the state, under the initiative of Sir A.E. Kennedy, that practical steps were taken towards this end.

The new Governor-in-Chief provided a stimulus to education by a policy of appointing qualified Africans to all grades of the Civil Service. In April 1868 he instituted competitive examinations for junior clerkships, and found that youths leaving the C.M.S. Grammar school were ready to meet the challenge. Not only did they fill junior posts in that colony, but they became liable to promotion when vacancies occurred in the other West African settlements like Gambia. Among those qualified for Kennedy's experiment were Zachariah Gibson, William Cates, Alfred Lewis, and Robert Syrett, contemporaries of

1. Memorial of certain Black inhabitants of Bathurst, African Times, March 1866.
2. [Parliamentary Papers, 1865, vol.V, Q.8513-19; 2045-6.] C.O.267/286,1865, Ord Report, Conclusion 3, Select Committee.
3. Fyfe, "History", p.358.

those Gambians who had entered the Grammar school in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties. The Customs Department provided the largest number of jobs for these men who had received further training on leaving school. Gibson and Lewis had both gone to sea to learn the art of navigation under Commodore Wilmot, who "took great pains in educating both of" them.[1] Both had subsequently been employed in the Customs at Sherbro. Gibson was therefore qualified to fill the post at Bathurst of Tide Surveyor and Quarantine Officer at a salary of £240 p.a. in 1870.[2] Shortly before this date, Robert Syrett, a youth of twenty, was appointed as 2nd Landing Waiter in the same Department at £40 p.a. William Cates, who had been trained at the C.M.S. college in Islington, London, before he returned to teach at his old school in Freetown, was appointed schoolmaster to the Anglican school which was opened in Bathurst in 1869.[3] Thus almost without exception, posts in the Government now available to Africans were filled by Sierra Leoneans, since it was argued that the Gambia had failed to qualify its citizens for them. It was not in vain that missionary bodies had set up seventy six schools with an average total attendance of 7,830 pupils in Sierra Leone.[4].

Kennedy's policy though favourable to educated Africans was bitterly resented by the Gambians as every new opening was filled from the neighbouring territory. Opposition came out openly in 1871 in a petition to the Secretary

1. C.O. 87/99, 1871, vol.1. 14th March, Kennedy to Kimberley; Tuboku - Metzger, "Historical Sketch", p.21.
2. C.O. 90/44, 1870, Blue Book of Statistics.
3. Ibid. Entrance Register.
4. Fyfe, "History", p.359.

of State against "the open and uncourteous disregard of Your Petitioners and other inhabitants of Bathurst by Sir A.E. Kennedy." They complained that having "endeavoured to educate their sons and daughters in the hope that not only would they be useful ornaments of society, but that they would equally share with others in the distribution of the colonial offices adequate to their sphere of intelligence, found that all situations were filled by men from Sierra Leone." That colony, they argued, could well provide for her own people, and the Gambia need not be "saddled" with them. It was only fair that as "men of property ... even as ratepayers and licence takers, that some of these vacant offices should be filled by some of them."[1]

Among the signatories to the petition was a hard core of clerks who had been to school in Sierra Leone, also the erstwhile Pierre Sallah (described as foreman of labourers at Forster and Smith's), and other persons like S.J. Forster, a clerk in the Commissariat Department who was later nominated to the Legislative Council. Kennedy, however, described them as the "rakings of the Gambia", pointing out that many of them had been dismissed from clerical jobs because of intemperance, insubordination or improbity; that Mr. Chase Walcott (A West Indian barrister domiciled in the colony and suspected of having drawn up the petition), had been "an inmate of Sierra Leone gaol for a considerable time"; and Joseph Reffell their leader was of doubtful character and had been refused admission to the Bar at Sierra Leone.[2] In short, the Governor-in-Chief was most unsympathetic to the aspirations of

1. C.O. 87/99, 1871, vol.1. 4th May, Petition of Africans to Kimberley.
2. C.O. 87/99, 1871, vol.1. 5th May & 7th June, Kennedy to Kimberley.

Liberated Africans in St. Mary's.

"What Gambia youngman is there at present qualified in point of character, and competent in point of education to fill the posts of Clerk of Courts, and Harbour Master, or Gaoler? ... What Mercantile House here, English or French, will employ any of those whose names figure at the end of the Petition? ... I beg to assure Your Excellency that rightminded men - men of property and influence ... are generally satisfied with Your Excellency's appointments and are too wise to be drawn aside by designing men ...."[1] The writer of this confidential letter to Kennedy was the recently appointed Colonial Chaplain of the Gambia, himself a Sierra Leonean - the Rev. George Nicol, son-in-law of Bishop Crowther. He believed the Governor's liberal policy towards his compatriots could only benefit the public service and indeed society in the Gambia which was only reaping "the fruit of fifty years' careless ease and neglect ...."[2] It was a hard judgment, but as a contemporary assessment of Gambian achievement in the field of education it is valuable. It would suggest that missionaries had not made that progress that might have been expected of them because of apathy evinced by the people even of Bathurst. Certainly the Administrator too, Henry Anton, was regretting in 1871 that even with a Government subsidy to education amounting to £328.16.0. progress was slow because "it is very difficult to secure the attendance of children who are admitted free." The Gambia was far from ready to introduce a system of grants based on attendance

1. C.O. 87/99, 1871, vol.1. 6th May, Rev. George Nicol to A.E.Kennedy.
2. Ibid.

and performance,[1] already in operation in Sierra Leone.

Under the superintendence of the Rev. Benjamin Tregaskis "a vigorous missionary inured to tropical service by thirty years in the West Indies", energy was concentrated upon building a well organized, disciplined Wesleyan church,[2] which equalled the progress that was being made in the state under Governor Kennedy. The most serious defect of the church in the eyes of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London was her inability to produce a qualified Native Ministry in the Gambia. It was a problem closely tied up with education, and so long as no institution for higher education existed in the settlement so long was the realization of a qualified indigenous ministry delayed. And under the unbending control of Tregaskis the Gambia remained largely dependent on Sierra Leone for Ministers.

Philip Wilson and James Hero were assistant Ministers from Sierra Leone in the 'sixties; and with York Clement, a Gambian, they kept the church in the outstations alive. Between them, they taught the people not only in English, "which is an imperfect medium of conveying truth to the minds of the people here," but also in the Aku and Popo languages, in Wolof and Mandinka.[3] In St. Mary's itself, a Wolof Primer and Grammar "which English-

1. C.O. 87/99, 1871, vol.1. 6th March, Colonel Henry Anton to Kennedy.
2. Fyfe, "History", pp.328 & 350.
3. 1871. Minutes - Gambia Annual District Meeting.

speaking Jolufs (Wolofs) highly appreciate" were in use; also a Wolof Liturgy, Dictionary and Class-Book were in preparation.[1] To a great extent the work was still evangelistic rather than educational; and when Wesleyans began to participate in commercial activity in the River, the mission found fresh avenues for evangelisation, and resolved in the District Meeting of 1867 to exhort "our trader members ... to exert themselves systematically during their absence in the trading season for the instruction of the people up the rivers in the elements of religious knowledge ....."[2] So that bibles and religious tracts became as much the equipment for the Christian trader in the River as the goods with which he traded. Such was the disturbed state of the riverain states and the upsurge of Islam, however, that Christianity could make no penetration beyond the pockets of settlements under British jurisdiction. It was to remain a religion of urbanised Africans, among whom the Islamic faith was also growing rapidly.

Nor did friction between European Ministers and their African assistants produce a healthy atmosphere for growth; the root of the trouble being the unsatisfactory manner of training Ministers locally by private reading and study. Ordination depended on passing exams based on such study as well as upon good conduct, but James Hero, for example, resented his delayed ordination and complained that "the Ministers in England are ordained."[3] Tregaskis seriously considered suspending him from his ministerial duties

1. 1871 Minutes - Gambia Annual District Meeting.
2. 1867 Minutes of Gambia Annual District Meeting.
3. 1869 Circuit Book - Enquiry into Mr. Hero's case.

for intemperance in 1869, but "other considerations" dictated "a modified action."[1] Under the rigid discipline of the Superintendent, this kind of inadequately trained missionary could not survive; and both Hero and Wilson were dismissed from the mission once they returned home to Freetown.[2] York Clement, however, having surmounted initial difficulties, gave satisfaction at the exams in 1869, and "upon the ground of his conduct and services" was recommended to be received into full connexion.[3] He was to play a significant role at his station in MacCarthy Island during the native wars as a leader of public opinion.

It was not, however, till 1879 that a local institution for higher education was founded in St. Mary's, both for training native agents, and for the education of the sons of the growing class of African entrepreneurs. The Wesleyan Boys' High School opened with fifteen boys under the Headship of the Rev. Robert Dixon, with a curriculum little different from that of the Grammar school in Sierra Leone. Like that institution, the aim was to make the school self-supporting, and "to make the people feel this is their institution and upon them its success depends ...." Annual Reports of the school were encouraging for showing the lively interest which parents were beginning to take in the education of their children;[4] but a tradition of advanced education and all it implied did not come easily. Economic demands

1. 1869 Circuit Book - Enquiry into Mr. Hero's case.
2. Fyfe, "History", p.350.
3. 1869 Minutes of Gambia Annual District Meeting.
4. 1880 Minutes of Annual Gambia District Meeting; (Wesleyan Methodist Society Library, London), Wesleyan Missionary Reports 1883.

took boys away from school for several months every year to trade up River, and parents were too eager to withdraw their boys from school as soon as they could find situations for them as clerks or traders.[1] Very little consideration was given to the needs of the church, and very few parents were willing to offer their sons as pupil teachers[2] or assistant missionaries.

Growing economic prosperity resulted in preference being given to a boarding school education 'abroad' for a larger number of Gambian boys than before. In 1881, the Boys High School in Bathurst contained twenty-one pupils,[3] but in the 'eighties no fewer than eighteen youths entered the C.M.S. Grammar school,[4] not including those who went to the Wesleyan Boys' School in Sierra Leone which had been founded in 1874.[5] Indeed, the daughters of the 'middle class' were also being considered for higher education abroad; a few were already in the C.M.S. Girls' boarding school, the Annie Walsh Memorial School, in Freetown. Those who could not afford this expensive training, sent their daughters to the Sisters of Charity in Bathurst for special tuition in Domestic subjects, especially Needlework and Dressmaking[6]

1. 1880 Minutes of Annual Gambia District Meeting; (Wesleyan Methodist Society Library, London), Wesleyan Missionary Reports 1883.
2. Wesleyan Missionary Reports 1902.
3. 1881 Minutes of Annual District Meeting.
4. Entrances Register.
5. Fyfe, "History", p.398.
6. 1877 Minutes of Annual District Meeting:- "The daughters of our members have either to go to the Nuns or else away from the Colony to get the education they need. This weakens our cause." - James Fieldhouse.

(Dressmaking and Teaching providing the only means of employment for 'gentlewomen'). The Rev. Robert Dixon was made aware of the needs for secondary education for girls in the Gambia, and recommended that any building constructed for this purpose was to make provision for a few boarders, for "it would repay the Society a hundredfold, and confer an unspeakable blessing on the colony." As he pointed out, it was vain to look for great improvement in the home until the women were "adequately educated under Christian influence."[1] The only surprise was that it took Wesleyan missionaries in the Gambia over half a century's labour in the educational field to find a congregation that was ready to provide its youngpeople with higher education.

By the 'eighties then missionaries could not simply concentrate on teaching church catechism and the three Rs, but had reached the stage of educating pupils for the future. There were good reasons for this slow revolution in education, not least among them the greater economic independence of the Liberated African community, and the cumulative effect of educational influences which had permeated society from a sprinkling of highly educated Africans from Sierra Leone in its midst since the 'sixties. Among these were Dr. Africanus Horton,[2] Staff Assistant Surgeon onetime stationed with the troops in MacCarthy Island, Dr. Thomas Spilsbury,[3] Colonial Surgeon, Rev. George Nicol[4] the second African to be appointed to

1. 1881 Minutes of Annual District Meeting.
2. Africanus Horton was of Ibo descent; Studied Medicine at Edinburgh. Fyfe, "History", pp.295 & 347.
3. Thomas Spilsbury - a Mulatto of Freetown, studied Medicine in London. Fyfe, "History", p.348.
4. George Nicol-of Temne & Susu descent, studied at Islington College, London. Fyfe, "History", p.252.

a West African Chaplaincy, Joseph Renner Maxwell[1] Queen's Advocate. These men inevitably affected the climate of opinion on the educational needs of West Africans.

Missionaries had failed in their original objectives of civilizing and educating the indigenous peoples of the Gambia, having been compelled by circumstances to concentrate in urban and coastal areas. MacCarthy Island was never a spearhead into the interior but, like Combo and the Ceded Mile, was a mere limb of the body at St. Mary's. Once the troops were withdrawn and Liberated Africans located there began to gain self-confidence and to consider the greater security of the capital, a steady migration began down the River, a movement that was given impetus by the ravages of war.[2] Thus while the dependencies of St. Mary's made very little contribution to its educational and spiritual life, in Sierra Leone, the Peninsular villages which surrounded Freetown had played a significant role in the life of that colony, not least in the field of education. While Islam with its emphasis on Arabic schools for boys combated the literacy problem in the hinterland, it also delayed the penetration of liberal and secular education, and generally prolonged a low standard of education in missionary schools throughout the Gambia.

As a result of missionary endeavour in St. Mary's and its environs, notwithstanding the limitations of its educational programme, a Liberated African community articulate in its demands and critical of the policies of

1. Joseph Renner Maxwell, son of the Colonial Chaplain at Cape Coast, a Liberated African, studied Law at Oxford & Lincoln's Inn. Fyfe, "History", pp.252 & 406.
2. C.O. 87/76, 1863, 22nd June, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

its rulers had emerged out of an amorphous mass of distressed and despised immigrants. Merchants of the settlement had made their own contribution towards improving the economic conditions of these people, and though the Government had given financial support to the Wesleyan mission since 1848, it was with the passing of the first Education Ordinance of 1882 that it really became involved in the educational development of its people.

CHAPTER V

THE QUEST FOR A POLITICAL IDENTITY 1829-1888.

Problems of Government were particularly difficult of solution in the Gambia settlement because of its meagre population and limited economic resources. To one Colonial Office Under-Secretary it was no more than a "knot of persons less numerous than the inhabitants of some petty village in England [constituting] a separate Government ... [with] neither the element nor the wealth from which to create the necessary institutions of Government."[1] British colonists, established on the Island of St. Mary's, thought differently, and unceasingly agitated for recognition of their peculiar needs. In practical terms, they demanded the appointment of a Governor and Legislative body with a Supreme Court for the peace, order, and good government of the settlement. They were difficult demands to meet, so that no permanent solution was found till the latter part of the nineteenth century.

From the point of view of men of business, the most urgent need was for "a separate local Government empowered ... to act at the moment and as circumstances may require."[2] Experience had taught them that a government at a distance of four hundred miles could not afford merchants that protection

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 15th August, C.O. Minute James Stephen to Mr.Hope.
2. C.O. 267/78, 1826, vol.8. 3rd May, Merchants' Memorial to Lord Bathurst. They gave reasons to show "the absolute necessity of establishing proper Courts":- In Dec. 1826 one Capt. Payne's cargo of Gunpowder was seized for breach of the Navigation Laws. He made three successive voyages to S'a Leone to get his case heard without success. In Feb.1828 Payne was given notice that his case was to be prosecuted in the Court of Common Pleas in St. Mary's. "By these means, an industrious and a respectable man in trade has been completely ruined." [C.O. 87/1,1828,6th May Memorial].

and encouragement in commerce which they claimed, for unfamiliarity with the Gambia situation and preoccupation with the interests of its own mercantile community, inevitably resulted in discriminatory or inapplicable policies by the Governor and Council of Sierra Leone. Complaints against subordination to Sierra Leone were complicated by dissatisfaction with a military Government on the spot, for until 1829, executive power in the Gambia was concentrated in the head of the military. Petitions, therefore, deplored encroachments of the Military upon civil liberties, consequent upon the Commandant's unacquaintance with the forms of civil administration and his ill-defined authority.[1] The settlement was as yet a long way from that political identity sought by its merchants.

When mercantile opinion was consulted by Commissioner Rowan in 1826, those leading merchants who gave evidence before him made categoric statements about the lack of a consistent or relevant policy from a Government "uninformed of our wishes, wants, and what may be necessary for regulating the Trade here." To Charles Grant, the settlement would continue to decline unless those interested in its prosperity were admitted to a share of its Government. Major Rowan was sufficiently convinced by their thesis (for ill-health confined him to St. Mary's) to recommend that "the prosperity of the Settlement would be promoted by the appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor and by the establishment of a Council or Court, empowered to make regulations for the trade and the internal affairs of the possessions in the River, subject to the approval

1. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.2. 28th June, Kenneth Macaulay to Bathurst.

of the Governor-in-Chief."[1] While pointing to the necessity of a court for the trial of misdemeanours, he warned that the powers of such a court were to be limited according to legal knowledge available in the settlement. It was a practicable report, acceptable to the merchants and to the British Government.

It was not till 1829 that a Lieutenant-Governor was appointed, but it soon became obvious that until legislative dependence on Sierra Leone was completely removed it was not less difficult to exert control over the executive authority under a civil administration. Indeed the machinery of Government remained cumbersome under which laws framed by the Lt.-Governor were to be submitted for the approval of the Governor and Council of Sierra Leone. The delays following this tedious procedure in an age of sailing ships were as detrimental to the welfare of the colonists in St. Mary's as under the former pattern of administration. Neither had the changes to improve the administration of justice been entirely satisfactory. The Court of Requests with its amateur judges continued as the backbone of the legal machinery, settling all claims under £10. Twelve Justices of the Peace were empowered to inflict fines, imprisonment for not more than three months, with hard labour, and whipping.[2] And as late as 1841, Dr. Madden found "many very unfit persons" among these magistrates, and criticised the practice of giving "every White person settled in the Colony, even to the Clerks in the principal Mercantile Houses, the Commission of the Peace."[3] As with the

1. C.O. 267/93, 1827, Rowan Report.
2. C.O. 267/173, 1841, Madden Report.
3. Madden Report.

civil administration, so too the administration of justice in the Gambia was simply a subsidiary branch of the legal department in Sierra Leone, whose Chief Justice was expected to hold Courts of Oyer and Terminer there.

Dissatisfaction with a dependent status created strains and stresses in the infant settlement which was to break out into open antagonism between the merchants and the Lt.-Governor. Other factors aggravated the situation - the disturbed state of the River of the 'thirties which interrupted trade and brought hardship to the mercantile community, was unfortunately accompanied by a Yellow Fever epidemic in 1837 during which Lt.-Governor Rendall died. He was an administrator greatly respected by the merchants for his past experience on the Bench, and his consistent policy of protection for traders in the River.[1] Rendall had shared the aspirations of his merchants and had hoped to reduce the dependence of the Gambia on Sierra Leone by securing for it a Legislative Council and an independent and qualified judiciary. For in any case, the executive itself needed legal guidance "in the preparation of such Legislative Acts as might be necessary to be submitted to the Governor and Council of Sierra Leone."[2] It was, however, left to his successors to continue the quest.

Though most people were agreed that some form of separateness was desirable for the well-being of the Gambia, there were also "very conflicting views" enunciated by colonists and officials as to the form such a change should take. Chief Justice Rankin after his visit to Bathurst to hold court

1. See Chapter III of Thesis - "Trade and Protection".
2. Gambia Archives, No. 28, 17th March 1835, Rendall to Lord Glenelg. C.O. 87/12, 1835.

in March 1835 had stated that very little inconvenience resulted from dependenc on an outside Legislature, while the merchants gave examples of how the distance from Sierra Leone, the infrequency of communication, and the ignorance of conditions in the Gambia delayed measures essential for the welfare of the settlement, making them inapplicable by the time the authorities in Bathurst were empowered to act.[1] As a middle course, Rankin had recommended the appointment of a King's Advocate who would not only advise the executive but would give service as chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas.

The problem in the eyes of officials was basically an economic one, the resources of the settlement being inadequate for either an elaborate or indeed a well-qualified administrative staff. The appointment of the Surgeon to the Liberated African Department as the Gambia's first Advocate was a clear indication of this. But merchants who had for twenty years manned the judiciary at no little criticism from all sections of the society and without financial compensation, did not look kindly on a paid Judge without legal qualification. Mr. Mantell, the Queen's Advocate, a youngman of about twenty-seven, took the precaution of enrolling as a law student at the Middle Temple when on leave in London,[2] but it is not certain that he ever qualified at the Bar. In any event, Mantell's office became an offence to the merchants, providing them with a target in their opposition to the local Government.

1. C.O. 87/19, 1838, 15th September, Memo by Major Mackie for Glenelg.
2. C.O. 87/79, 1864, vol.1. 21st January, Governor d'Arcy to Duke of Newcastle.

By 1842, the most influential merchants had assumed the role of an opposition bloc to the Administration in St. Mary's, particularly to Lt.-Governor T.L.Ingram and Chief Justice Mantell. Charles Grant, I.J.S.Finden and Thomas Brown were alleged to be the instigators of a "party highly inimical to the Authorities at the Gambia."[1] That cooperation between all communities which had been a feature of the early history of St. Mary's was being replaced by bitter rivalry and growing discontent. Such tactics were aimed not only at individual officials who happened to be unpopular, but at the whole structure of Government which excluded the mercantile element from its deliberations, an element that was now so confident of its own importance and of its usefulness to officials in various capacities, that opposition became a real threat to their survival.

It was James Stephen of the Colonial Office who aptly stated the dilemma of Government in small territories. "If you make the attempt [to provide efficient government] you are charged with ruining the Colony by extravagance and disproportionate establishments. If you do not make it you are charged with each individual grievance...."[2] Stephen's conclusion was equally interesting. He preferred "the occasional and particular grievance to the chronic and general grievance of keeping up a costly establishment with nothing to do for nine-tenths of the year ...."[3] While most problems of the Gambia sprang from the insurmountable one of finance, the situation in

1. C.O. 87/33, 1844, vol.1. 10th May, T.L.Ingram to Lord Stanley.
2. C.O. 87/33, 1844, vol.1. 15th August, C.O. Minute James Stephen to Mr. Hope.
3. C.O. 87/33, 1844, vol.1. 15th August, Stephen to Hope.

the settlement was more complex than Stephen's appraisal suggested. It was not simply the problem of funds for running an efficient Public Service, but also the far less easily definable factor of social relations in a small community which entangled officials and inhabitants at manifold points of contact. The "sociological aspects" of the Gambia problem relative to its smallness were as worthy of consideration as its economic deficiency.

Administrative inefficiency, in part the outcome of a policy of centralisation in the West African settlements, had created a social problem in St. Mary's so that by the 'forties opposing interests and individual and personal animosities and recriminations were seriously dictating the public behaviour of officials and merchants. The immediate reason for political upheaval in this period was failure on the part of local officials to inspire confidence and respect in the mercantile community which constituted the most influential body of citizens. For risks were attached to the policy of recruiting staff locally for the recently established civil establishment in Bathurst, whereby unsuccessful merchants and junior officials were invariably appointed to senior posts in the Civil Service whenever this was possible rather than new men brought out from England. The "smallness of the total social field" in St. Mary's where "many roles [were] played by relatively few individuals", the same persons being brought into contact frequently in various activities, had important implications for political, economic and social development. One disadvantage was that decisions of individuals were not infrequently influenced by their many-sided relationships with other

individuals.[1] Indeed, a constant complaint from the merchants was against Public Officers performing in too many roles, thereby being given unlimited opportunity for discriminatory practices where they were so inclined. The defence of the system was that it aimed at relieving a poor colony of excessive expenditure.

The key word of the petitions in the 'forties was 'misrule' or 'maladministration'. Lt.-Governor Ingram described it as "the bye word at the Gambia since I first came here twenty years ago."[2] But whereas earlier petitions had been concerned with the delays involved in a tedious legal process, now they deplored "the uncertain and partial administration of law"[3] in the settlement. The very personal nature of memorials in 1842 was a new feature, and clear indication of the trend of events. In proportion as mercantile influence over the executive authority was reduced in the settlement so opposition forces were mustered against those who had displaced them; but opposition was not simply a sign of resentment. For a Chief Judge without legal qualification and with far less experience in the courts than merchants on whose cases he pronounced judgment was likely to make mistakes, perhaps very grave mistakes. In October 1842, Thomas Brown led a petition praying

1. Institute of Commonwealth Studies, November 7th 1962, Seminar Paper on "Sociological aspects of smallness." by Dr. Burton Benedict.
2. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 22nd October. T.L.Ingram to Lord Stanley.
3. C,O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 11th March, Merchants' Petition to Lord Stanley.

for Mantell's removal on the grounds of "very grave misconduct and want of probity and integrity."[1] Merchants were not unreasonably disturbed by a system where Appeal was heard by persons who had given judgment in a lower court. Further, they suspected that official pressure was exerted in the courts through Alexander Ingram, brother of the Lt.-Governor and an assistant Judge; so that "in all cases when a Magistrate or Officer of Government is a party, the said Chief Judge displays a fixed and obviously preconcerted resolution to defeat the possibility of obtaining constitutional redress."[2] These were serious allegations in a settlement where a gaol delivery might only be held once in eighteen months when the Chief Justice of Sierra Leone could be transported to St. Mary's; but the petitioners had not presented the complete picture, for their interests were represented in the said Court of Common Pleas by one of their own number, W.H.Goddard an established merchant.

A period of bitter struggle between Government and people, particularly the White inhabitants, had opened. The local Government in its own defence accused the mercantile community with a determination to interrupt the administration of justice by using undue influence over jurors, the majority of whom were their own "clerks, friends and connexions." The Lloyd family, for example, were supposed to wield great influence in commercial circles, not only in St. Mary's but also in MacCarthy Island. The Lt.-Governor complained that "the influence of the Lloyd family ... has always ensured

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 22nd October, Ingram to Lord Stanley.
2. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 17th October, Merchants' Memorial to Lord Stanley.

success to any of its members without reference to the justice of the case in which they have been engaged."[1] Such suspicions merely paralysed Government so that little benefit was derived from the presence of a Lt.-Governor on the spot; and the legal machinery itself was very nearly brought to a standstill.

Opposition to the local Government for a time became a rallying point for all disgruntled elements. Edward Lloyd was by now the patriarch of an extended family of Whites and Mulattoes which was an economic and political force in the settlement. By this period, Charles Grant had formed a subsidiary trading company under the authority of Forster and Smith, through whose contacts in London disputes with the local Authorities in the Gambia could not fail to reach the Colonial Office. Within the opposition were found those who had been dismissed the Service for misconduct, including a fragmentary group of Africans who had found employment with the merchants.[2] Consistently they harried the Government of St. Mary's and its dependency of MacCarthy Island with a determination to secure political recognition for themselves.

In MacCarthy Island where the Commandant, Captain Alexander Findlay, as ex officio Magistrate had prosecuted a large number of the merchants' traders for slave-dealing in the Upper River, and found many of them guilty, bitter resentment had ensued, and a protracted court case initiated by the merchants against Findlay for abuse of magisterial power. Findlay was

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 22nd Oct., Ingram to Stanley.
2. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 21st Oct., List of Petitioners compiled by Judges of Common Pleas for Lt.-Gov. Ingram.

charged under five heads, all constituting "a series of wanton and unlawful cruelties upon H.M.'s liege and unoffending subjects."[1] Such was the strength of public opinion, that in June 1842 Findlay had to muster support outside the colony for his cause, "knowing well the dead set upon me by the majority of the merchants and mulatto population of the Settlement who in all probability will compose the Jury." Damages claimed against him amounted to £2000, and the alternative punishment of imprisonment was such a real threat, that he begged his father, Colonel Findlay, to bring the circumstances of the case before the Secretary of State. In the final analysis, ultimate authority lay there; though merchants could threaten officials, it was well nigh impossible to take effective action against them which would lead to dismissal or imprisonment. Once the Lt.-Governor came to the support of the accused, showing that the root of the trouble was personal animosity against a vigilant administrator, Findlay's acquittal was ensured.

Where the acts of the Government disrupted trade, there was opposition marshalled in all its strength. It would seem that Findlay's administration had had repercussions on the commerce of the River. His arbitrary treatment

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 1st December, Charles Grant & Co., William Forster to Lord Stanley.
   (i) Charges were made by Mrs. Riley, Phoebe Thomas and Mandingo.
   (ii) Conniving"at the rapacity of the soldiers under his Command ..."
   (iii) As J.P. "authorised and inflicted cruel, illegal and tyrannical punishments..."
   (iv) ... inflicted "arbitrary and cruel punishments both upon unoffending inhabitants and natives temporarily visiting the Island ..."
   (v) "...unlawfully pressing and by means of force and fear compelling, as well inhabitants as visitors ... to carry without pay ... provisions to the troops at Cattabar ..."
   C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 15th June, Alexander Findlay to Colonel Findlay.

of long distance traders had so alarmed them that they "now convey their produce to the Portuguese settlement at Geba and the French factory at Saidgee, passing within a few miles of MacCarthy Island."[1] The merchants, however, knew that diversion of trade from the Gambia was more often the result of political struggles in the interior states than the outcome of a restrictive policy directed from Sierra Leone or by officials like Findlay. For all this, to a trading community the first task of Government was the protection of trade and traders, and any acts against traders were treated as hostile moves which were to be resisted.

It was not only the Government but the Judges too whose task was made very difficult by the demands of the mercantile community. As a result of the 1842 incidents, all the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas tendered their resignations, with an explanation that the Court was "liable to be made a dangerous instrument of annoyance, persecution and malevolence instead of being a protection to liberty and justice."[2] Lt.-Governor Ingram would not accept the resignations for fear of exposing the administration to the intrigues of a local faction, there being a shortage, as he affirmed, of "efficient persons for the honorary offices of Judges and Magistrates".[3] Though without legal qualification, the present Judges were "highly educated Gentlemen."[4] Goddard had certainly been a Magistrate since the settlement received its Charter in 1822 and was respected for "acknowledged integrity

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 1st Dec., Grant & Forster to Lord Stanley.
2. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 4th Oct., Mantell, A.Ingram, Goddard to T.L.Ingram.
3. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 8th Oct., Ingram to Judges.
4. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 22nd Oct., Ingram to Lord Stanley.

and sound sense; like his colleagues, he had accepted office "with the view of rendering services to the community and to accommodate the Local Government."

Yet a little more than goodwill was required from officials in a growing settlement that was over a quarter of a century old, and within such close proximity of Senegal where the Governors were usually men of distinction and high rank from the Services. The merchants of St. Mary's felt it was an insult that an insolvent trader like Ingram with bad debts in Senegal and Gambia should have risen so rapidly in Government service that he was now Acting Lt.-Governor. They therefore openly demanded officials of integrity and dignity who would not only command the respect of the local community, but also of the neighbouring French Authorities. They complained that Captain Bonet, Governor-in-Chief of French West Africa, and formerly Commander of the French Squadron on the Coast, had declined "to pay that respect and courtesy ... to H.M.'s Representative at the Gambia, which it is indispensable they should do in the intercourse which is unavoidable between the respective Settlements of the two Nations in that neighbourhood ...."[2]

It was the casual method of appointing to posts of responsibility in the Civil Service that the merchants were beginning to protest against. They felt they deserved better treatment, especially if the settlement was to approach the dignity of other colonies and command their respect. In their view, Ingram's type was an unfortunate choice since he did not possess firmness, "nor can he ever, in Gambia at all events, acquire that moral

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 22nd Oct., Ingram to Stanley.
2. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 24th Sept., John Hughes on behalf of Merchants to Lord Stanley.

influence necessary to perform [the duties of the Government] effectually."[1] Thus by 1842 public opinion was articulate on all aspects of Government policy and behaviour, a mark of self-assurance and consolidation in the mercantile community, which was itself a qualification for a greater share in the affairs of state. At least the merchants thought so. The Colonial Office perspective had been delineated by James Stephen, but circumstances demanded that the political aspirations of the merchants should be met.

A new era dawned with the Madden Report of 1841 which recommended that: "The growing importance of this settlement and great increase in its trade, would render it necessary ... to make it independent of Sierra Leone as to the framing of its laws and the execution of them." Madden wanted to see a Council in the Gambia with a membership of officials, representatives of the mercantile body and of the coloured residents.[2] His liberal views reflected the spirit of the Durham Report on Canada, which a year before had so clearly stated the disadvantages of governing British colonists overseas through

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 24th Sept., John Hughes to Lord Stanley. T.L.Ingram had entered Government service as Clerk of the Customs and of the Police Court in 1835. As a result of the epidemic of 1837 which reduced the administrative staff to ridiculous proportions, he soon found himself acting Lt.-Gov. In 1849 charges were made against him for falsehoods told to the S/S, and he was found guilty of fraud in his public accounts.
C.O. 87/45, 1849, vol.1. 2nd March, Governor MacDonnell to Earl Grey. 10th July, Earl Grey to MacDonnell.

2. C.O. 267/173. Madden Report 1841.

Colonial Office representatives to the exclusion of the colonists. Without a share in the government, local elements became disaffected and finally revolted against their rulers in self preservation.

Dr. Madden showed the same breadth of vision in his recommendations for the judiciary. While he thought that the appointment of a qualified Chief Justice would answer the objections of the merchants, he submitted an alternative should expense prohibit such an appointment:- "A stipendiary Magistrate of the legal profession associated with one or two of the senior local Justices might preside over the Courts of Quarter Sessions."[1] His aim was unmistakably to separate the Gambia settlement from dependence on Sierra Leone; for the Lt.-Governor himself - Henry Huntley - had complained of the delays in the administration of justice resulting in inconvenience and hardship to prisoners, and the anomalous position of the settlement with regard to the enactment of laws, which took between one and three years to be returned from Sierra Leone for implementation.

Inability to control taxation and the application of the revenue without a Legislative Assembly had frustrated the merchants on whose payment of duties the colonial funds depended. They had complained for some years that "each succeeding Governor, regardless of necessary improvements contemplated by his predecessors and actually in progress, has expended the revenue ... for personal gratification ...." Thus, they argued, neither a

1. C.O. 267/173. Madden Report 1841.

market nor a wharf had been built from public funds; and only when the settlement was in control of its own affairs, with a Council that would "prevent the injudicious expenditure of revenue", would there be stability and progress.[1] For commercial development was the purpose of the settlement, and the pursuit of trade was inseparable from the execution of laws which controlled trade.

Madden's appreciation of the degree of interdependence between commerce and Government was of great importance to the future development of the colony. It was partly his conciliatory attitude towards the promoters of trade in the Gambia which gave that body the confidence it needed for its outspoken representations to the Secretary of State in the year after the Report, culminating in the dispatch of John Hughes (a Mulatto merchant whose early youth had been spent in England and later in Senegal), to expose before the Metropolitan government the defective attributes of their acting Lt.-Governor. The purpose being to indicate that in the event of independence being granted, a change of Governor would be necessary.[2]

Separation from Sierra Leone came in June 1843 with the creation of an Executive and Legislative Council on which the mercantile community was represented. The first unofficials in Council were Edward Lloyd and W.H. Goddard; and it was left to them to watch commercial interests and to maintain the independence that had been gained. It required perspicacity and determination, on the part of the mercantile community to produce those

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 11th March, Merchants' Petition to Lord Stanley.
2. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 13th September, John Hughes to Lord Stanley.

changes in the form of Government which the Royal Charter had anticipated. It was found necessary to submit a petition in 1844 regretting that the provisions of the Charter were so far "rendered abortive and nugatory",[1] since officers in the administrative machinery had remained unchanged.

The appointment of Commander Charles Fitzgerald, R.N., as the new Governor and of Mr. Robert Graves MacDonnell as Chief Justice, were long-awaited developments in the settlement; but it was soon made very clear in Colonial Office policy that while the Gambia remained financially dependent it could not afford all the changes befitting to its new status. For that reason, on MacDonnell's acceding to the governorship of the settlement in 1847, Mantell was promoted from Queen's Advocate to Chief Justice.[2] Renewed mercantile opposition to the appointment of an unqualified judge at a time when the Gambia was considering an "Ordinance to establish a Supreme Court of Civil, Criminal and Equity Jurisdiction and also a Court of Appeal", was united, being directed by their representatives in the Legislative Council.[3] Indeed, in the twenty-three years in which the Gambia enjoyed independence from Sierra Leone, the mercantile community did not fail to make its influence felt through its representatives in Council. By the end of that period, the merchants had not only increased their number in the Legislative Council, but

1. C.O. 87/33, 1844, vol.1. Merchants' Petition to Lord Stanley.
2. C.O. 90/24, 1850, Blue Book of Statistics.
3. C.O. 87/45, 1849, col.1. 26th February, MacDonnell to Earl Grey.

they had infiltrated the official stronghold of the Executive Council.[1]

Political maturity, however, was to be found inadequate for efficient government without economic independence. That was a major reason why the brief period of local 'self-government' was to be succeeded by greater centralization under Sierra Leone in 1866. The limitations imposed upon Government in the Gambia by virtue of peculiar conditions there were unreconcilable with mercantile demands, and resulted in antagonism between officials and unofficials in Council. Over the dispute precipitated by Mantell's appointment, MacDonnell observed in a despatch that "the colonists have no right to complain of an unprofessional man acting as Chief Justice occasionally here, till the Colony is willing and able to pay a professional substitute, especially as there has not been a record for trial in a civil cause in the Supreme Court since I acted Chief Justice four years ago."[2] The colony itself at that time only contributed £70 towards the local courts as against £1,200 contributed by the imperial Treasury. It was thus established that while such a discrepancy existed, "it would be neither reasonable nor expedient to fetter the Home Government with similar restrictions."[3]

Although policy was now initiated by a government in St. Mary's, it was a government exclusively White, without Mulatto or African representation. Dr. Madden had not failed to notice the claims, tacit though they may have been,

1. When Colonel Ord visited the Gambia in 1864, he found Thomas Brown in the Ex. Co. in his capacity as acting Queen's Advocate.
   C.O. 267/286, 1865, Ord Report, Question & Answer 6743 ff.
2. C.O. 87/45, 1849, vol.1. 26th February, MacDonnell to Earl Grey.
3. C.O. 87/45, 1849, vol.1. 28th May, Earl Grey to MacDonnell.

of these elements in society, in his recommendations for the settlement. As yet, neither the Christian Wolof nor the Liberated African in St. Mary's was ready for direct representation on the Council; but they were not unaware of their interests, nor of the degree to which those interests were affected by the Government's policies. Liberated Africans were already organizing themselves in Friendly Societies which were to become councils for discussion and for taking executive measures. Under 'Headmen', primitive justice was administered, fines imposed, and decisions taken for concerted action. One official report stated that Liberated Africans were thus "kept in terror and ruled despotically by some secret power possessed by the Heads ...."[1] They certainly gave the order to sign petitions, and it would seem that all members were bound by such an order. Such Societies were in touch with official policy and articulate public opinion, for a nucleus of 'Headmen' was already employed in the lower grades of the Civil Service, and others were traders and mercantile clerks. In consequence, not only did Liberated Africans come to use the petition procedure as a weapon against arbitrary rule, but their very grievances were set out in patterns already laid out.

Local self-government, then, stimulated the growth of African public opinion and produced a group of men as critical of the policies of an independent government, as British merchants had been of a dependent government. In 1849, one hundred and thirty-nine of them signed a petition to the Secretary of State in which they accused Governor MacDonnell of

1. C.O. 87/46, 1849, vol.2. 12th September, T.F.Quin to MacDonnell.

"supineness", of misapplication of the public revenue, of excessive taxation as compared with what obtained in the neighbouring French territories, and of oppression of its Black inhabitants.[1] The immediate reason for African discontent lay in the great hardship experienced by the poorer inhabitants during the rainy season of 1849 when the greater part of the Island was inundated as a result of the crumbling of the sea wall. Against this crisis was a background of smouldering disaffection towards the government, in part due to the indiscretions of former administrations. An example of this was the forfeiture of one hundred town lots to government in 1827 on the grounds of inadequate title deeds, without any legal process having been served against the owners, all of whom were "simple Blacks".[2] The quest for a political identity was not therefore reserved for White pursuers, but urbanised Africans, too, joined a 'movement' from which they hoped to derive social and economic benefits first, and political rights later.

Under the governorship of Colonel L.S.O'Connor, the Gambia Legislative Council developed into an active forum for discussion in which unofficial members made significant contribution, justifying demands for the colony to run its own affairs. In January 1858, a third mercantile member was added

1. C.O. 87/46, 1849, vol.2. 24th August, Petition of Black inhabitants to Earl Grey.
2. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 11th March, Merchants' Petition to Lord Stanley.
" " " " 2nd April, T.L.Ingram to Stanley.

to the Council - Thomas Chown[1] whose father had been one of the founders of St. Mary's. As the result of the death of Edward Bocock (who had succeeded Lloyd in the Council), Thomas Quin,[2] formerly Registrar of Courts and Clerk of Councils till he turned merchant, was appointed to fill the vacancy. Together they made a formidable and surprisingly capable element in the Council.

Debates fell under two categories:- There were those ordinances which were for the general welfare of the colony and which received the unanimous votes of all elements in Council with little or no discussion; and, by contrast, other bills which provoked serious debate and split officials from unofficials. These latter, invariably affected mercantile interests and prompted unofficials to take the initiative in debate. Whereas the Standing Rules and Orders of the Council were willingly suspended so that an ordinance for compelling the people to have their children vaccinated could be immediately proclaimed to control a smallpox epidemic in 1858;[3] the debate on the Grumetta Act[4] which took place a few months after it, and that on the Free Navigation of the Gambia to the French,[5] showed the unofficials in all their aggressiveness. It required a very able and shrewd Governor to encourage these promoters of trade on whom the revenue primarily depended, without prejudicing the interests of the other communities in the colony.

1. C.O. 87/67, 1859, 14th February, O'Connor to Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/69, 1860, 24th Feb., d'Arcy to Newcastle.
3. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 3rd April 1858, Legislative Council Minutes.
4. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 21st June 1858 " " "
5. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 19th August 1858. Leg. Co. Mins.; See Chapter III of thesis.

The Grumetta Act, for the regulation of conditions of service of labourers and artisans, had been passed in Sierra Leone in 1825; and was applicable to the Gambia settlement, it being then a dependency of Sierra Leone. The Act, however, did not reach the Gambia till 1841; but its maladministration had caused Harry Finden in 1856 to make representation to O'Connor against imprisonment of workmen and labourers by their employers, and the invidious system long-established by merchants of paying wages partly in goods. It was O'Connor's intervention on behalf of the victims which had antagonised the employers, and caused the resignation of two merchant-Magistrates. Government saw the Grumetta Act as it stood as too dangerous a weapon in the hands of a powerful employer union, which was permitted by law to claim satisfactory labour for wages agreed upon.[1]

Debate in the Legislative Council in 1858 was initiated by a despatch of the Secretary of State instructing the Governor to repeal sections 9 and 10 of the Act, as being arbitrary. To unofficials in Council this was seen as not only an economic threat, but as an infringement of their hard-won political rights. This latter fear was to be expressed openly by Goddard in another debate. On this occasion, too, he was ready to express the views of his colleagues in his usual succinct phraseology. If the mechanics of the colony "had been in the state they are now, thirty years ago," he remarked, "this place never would have been built."[2] They fought hard to save

1. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 21st June 1858. Leg. Co. Mins.;
   C.O. 87/83, 1865, vol.2. November, Memorial of Friendly Societies to Newcastle. Cardwell
2. 21st June 1858. Leg. Co. Mins.

themselves from the "idling away time by mechanics when engaged in work." Chown and Bocock recommended that a fixed rate of wages for artisans would safeguard the interests of the merchants and simplify the administration of the law by Magistrates; but no official support was given to them. This was a situation in which official views were in advance of public opinion, so that the local Governor was faced with a problem of educating reactionary elements in Council. Lord Stanley had pointed out that the Act was originally passed to meet specific labour problems resulting from slavery; O'Connor reminded unofficials that "a vast improvement [had] taken place in the native population" since that time - a growing independence and respectability by means of self-help which deserved recognition.[1] Thus the objectionable clauses of the obsolescent Act were repealed[2] inspite of violent unofficial opposition. It was "arbitrary ... and contrary to British freedom" that a law should exist in a British colony which compelled people who were not vagrants to work.[3]

It was often easier for officials to take a less subjective view of matters affecting the African community, their responsibility extending to the whole society and not limited to a privileged few. There were many instances, however, when Governors concentrated on the interests of the commercial magnates who expected policy to enhance their superiority in the settlement; for they equated their importance and prosperity with that of the Gambia's.

1. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 21st June 1858. Leg. Co. Mins.
2. " " " 19th July 1858. " " " - "Ordinance for the better regulation of artisans, sailors, labourers, & other servants" was passed.
3. 21st June 1858. Leg. Co. Mins.

It was therefore not unusual for merchants to find themselves at variance with the Authorities, particularly when the head of the administration was a benevolent officer and kindly-disposed towards the African community in St. Mary's. The Secretary of State continued to be the Appeal body for dissatisfied subjects in British colonies; but at this level, too, decisions taken depended to a large extent on the personality and imagination of advisers available to that Minister in the Colonial Office.

Overriding powers exercised by Colonial Office over the local legislature were to create a crisis later in 1858, on the issue of the free navigation of the River Gambia to the French. While independence from Sierra Leone had brought with it a full share in the deliberations of the Government of St. Mary's, it had not in any way transferred power from the Executive to the Legislative Council, inspite of the fact that unofficials held three out of seven seats in the latter Council. Their duty was primarily of an advisory nature, ultimate control resting with the Colonial Office. It was significant that in protest against what unofficials considered to be infringement of their rights, they were prepared to resign their commissions notwithstanding their prestige value.[1] It was not to be the only instance when the merchants refused to compromise the dignity of their status; or insisted that their advice on matters pertaining to the internal affairs of the colony, in particular its commerce, deserved greater recognition from the Government.

1. See Chapter III of Thesis.

In the last few years before the fortunes of the Gambia were once more linked with those of Sierra Leone under a common Council, the character of the legislature in the former territory had undergone marked changes, reflectin those developments which had occurred in the society at large. By 1861, many of the original merchants of St. Mary's (who had founded the settlement from Goree and Senegal), had either died off (among the deceased were William Forster, Edward Lloyd, Edward Bocock), or had left the settlement in favour of retirement in the British Isles (Charles Grant, Thomas Chown). A new type of merchant was replacing the old; and with him the French merchant emerged. Indeed, the opening of the River to the French was not only of economic significance; its political overtones did not elude the merchants, who having removed the yoke of the Sierra Leone Government were now faced with a serious French threat from which they sought to withdraw. Both W.H. Goddard and Thomas Brown offered their premises to the Colonial Government for sale at £3000 and £4,500 respectively in 1859,[1] with the hope of retiring to England. That they did not succeed was a mixed blessing for the Gambia.

An interesting feature of Government of the 'sixties and 'seventies was an alliance between Thomas Brown and long-resident officials such as John Mantell (Chief Justice), and Daniel Robertson (Colonial Secretary). While the breakdown of barriers between Government and people was a sign of political growth, it unfortunately caused fragmentation in a small society, the outcome of which was that African traders began to diverge from their

1. C.O. 87/69, 24th June 1859, Leg. Co. Minutes, Captain Anton to Newcastle.

European employers at a tangent. From now on, they were to resist rule by faction from which they were naturally excluded, and which they considered to be a retrograde step in constitutional development. Governor d'Arcy too was acutely aware of the subtle control gradually concentrated in a merchant-'oligarchy' and nurtured, as he described it, "for the last fifty years ... converting the nominee of the Crown into a Doge" for the purpose of benefiting mercantile interests at the expense of all others, including imperial interests. He concluded that this was to be expected where a clique of men had "lived together for the last twenty-five years in one place with a community of ideas and interests that clash with those of a Stranger who has served in other parts of the world."[1] Indeed the circumstances of the time - the very disturbed state of the River and the consequent decline of the revenue - provided the stimulus for cliques.

In Council meetings, d'Arcy was struck by a lack of sympathy for his "zealous exertions"; his Councillors being of long experience and residence on the Coast had "long given up the Natives as impracticable of improvement." He interpreted "a very united mercantile opposition"[2] to himself as a tactical move on the part of Councillors who preferred a mere official of routine than one who planned to effect some good for the majority of the inhabitants. It was a shift in goals; the merchant was bound by a limited horizon of commercial prosperity, whereas a Governor who took his vocation seriously was in duty bound to attend to the needs of all. It proved a difficult task for

1. C.O. 87/77, 1863, 29th December, G.d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. Ibid.

d'Arcy, who, finding himself in pecuniary embarrassment,[1] and,in disagreement with his own officials, began to court mercantile favour through the person of Thomas Brown. This merchant was to dominate Gambian life and politics for another two decades, having risen from the status of clerk in the Colonial Secretary's Office in 1829 to that of acting Queen's Advocate and ex officio Member of the Executive Council in 1861.[2] Two years later, he was acting Chief Justice during Mantell's leave,[3] and in general had assumed such influence in mercantile and official circles, that he was now a threat to the liberty of the African community in St. Mary's.

By the sixties, there was noticeable antagonism between the two races in the colony - Africans and Europeans - to which numerous factors had contributed over a long period, the fundamental reason being the advancing maturity of urbanised Africans whose demands for equal rights with European inhabitants of the colony were to disturb its equilibrium. When Governor d'Arcy appeared to sympathise with African aspirations by appointing two African Magistrates in 1863 - (Thomas Johnson, a Liberated African in the Colonial Secretary's Office, and Seymour Gay, a Wolof of Goree, and Superintendent of Police),[4] a rift in society resulted because it was not in the programme of merchants who had struggled long for a share in the Government that political power should be shared with their own traders and

1. C.O. 87/71, 1861, 21st Dec., Colonial Office Minute, Elliott to Fortescue; Editor on British West African Governments, Af.Times,Sept.1865.
2. C.O. 87/76, 25th January 1863, Ex. Co. Minutes for 22nd August, 1861.
3. C.O. 87/77, 1863, 14th December, Colonial Office Minute T.F.Elliott to C.Fortescue.
4. C.O. 87/77, 1863, 21st December, Merchants' Petition to Newcastle.

clerks. In a straight letter to the Governor they demanded an explanation to justify "so wanton an insult to the unpaid Magistrates of this colony, as to endeavour to force them to associate with the 2nd Writer ... and ... a Sergeant. Men without education, position or any stake in the colony beyond their small salaries, and neither of whom were ever in Europe."[1] [sic]

As evidence that they were "not influenced by colour", they submitted that they themselves had coloured connections in the colony, and that no objection had been taken to the late A.F.Pierre's appointment to the Magistracy in 1850.[2] Pierre was in fact a Mulatto who had been Warehouseman to William Forster, and with others of his community formed the periphery of the mercantile oligarchy. Disapproval of the appointments was in part suspicion of Africans in Government Service over whom they could exercise little control; indeed, they called Johnson and Gay favourites of the Governor. Basically, however, mercantile reaction in 1863 was simply an expression of mid-nineteenth century attitudes towards the natives of Africa. In their own words, "the natives have always looked with confidence and respect upon the whites; it has been left to Governor d'Arcy to disturb that harmony and to set up a feeling of race amongst us."[3]

In the Gambia, reactionary elements were more often found in the mercantile community than among Governors, who were not always indifferent to articulate African opinion expressed in the Press and in memorial. d'Arcy

1. C.O. 87/78, 1863, vol.3. 17th Dec., Letter of six J.Ps. (Brown,Goddard, Quin ....) to d'Arcy.
2. Ibid.
3. C.O. 87/77, 1863, 21st Dec., Magistrates' Petition to Newcastle.

admitted to having "lately perceived a feeling amongst the better educated that they imagine it is the Gambia policy to keep them back whilst the sister Colonial Government bestows upon them a fair portion of appointments ...." He was in favour of pursuing a liberal policy in West Africa, inspite of the unfortunate breakdown of the system in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone where African Magistrates had been found guilty of improbity. "Members even of the British Parliament have fallen from their high estate", he observed.[1] But the Colonial Office had no more faith in the Governor's judgment or sincerity than did the merchants of St. Mary's, and when Justice Mantell associated himself with mercantile opinion on this issue affirming that his court would be made to look "ridiculous" and to lose the respect of the public,[2] the Secretary of State was satisfied that the appointments should be cancelled.[3]

Thus growth towards a workable self-government was seriously hampered by racial tensions within the settlement whose communities were no longer agreed upon European leadership or indeed upon common interests. No less united were officials themselves, so that representations to the Colonial Office were so numerous and often so contradictory that "the Imperial Government ... is not in a position to know what the people really feel."[4] If petitions and letters were misleading, a number of incidents in the 'sixties removed all doubts on African goals and attitudes.

1. C.O. 87/77, 1863, 29th Dec., d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/77, 1863, 21st Dec., John Mantell to Newcastle.
3. C.O. 87/79, 1864, vol.1. 11th March, Newcastle to d'Arcy.
4. C.O. 87/80, 1864, vol.2. 22nd Aug., d'Arcy to Newcastle.

The most explosive situation in St. Mary's was found in the law courts where Africans resisted what they called maladministration of justice by lay Magistrates, and took whatever action was open to them outside the courts. Where merchants and their clerks could sit as Magistrates on their own suits and charges, it was not surprising that judgment sometimes led to uproar in court, or that a community without representation on the bench should clamour for a paid Magistrate "who is independent of both black and white."[1] So determined were Africans to get justice that they subscribed to a fund to send Joseph Reffell to study law in England. In St. Mary's itself, they made men like Thomas Brown, and Dr. Sherwood the Colonial Surgeon, targets of resistance.

Sherwood was not only disliked for injustice as a Magistrate, but for negligence towards his patients.[2] So that when in September 1864 he broke into a coach house and took out a communal hearse to which he was not a subscriber because he had to bury a white sailor, the whole African community on the Island rallied to their leaders to make this a test case. The African proprietors regarded this as another threat to liberty, and with a subscription fund of £250 they planned to employ an attorney from Sierra Leone to prosecute Sherwood for burglary. The case was only dropped when no attorney could be induced to leave business in Freetown for that sum.[3] For

1. "Civic" on Injustice in the Courts, African Times, Sept., 1865.
2. J.W.Sawyer on Dr. Sherwood, African Times, June 1866; "Observer" in African Times, April 1866. "Is it not true that the educated natives have such a dread of the Colonial Hospital now and of the way in which they might be treated there that they shun going to it even at the risk of dying ....?" "A Gambian", Af. Times, May 1866.
3. "A Native Oyster", in African Times, December 1867; "Civic", Af. Times, Nov. 1865.

the moment, however, Sherwood was discriminated against by those he had insulted, so that "he could not get a carpenter or mason to work for him" for many months. The serious racial feeling sparked off by what d'Arcy misguidedly called "an accidental circumstance", was unexpected by officials and brought forcibly to them the influence exerted by Friendly Societies.[1]

That it was thought necessary to pass an ordinance "For the Regulation of Friendly Societies ...."[2] was itself an acknowledgement of the emergence of "a tyrant minority"[3] from within the African community as a political force. A new type of African, unlike the skilled mechanics and apprentices of the 'thirties and 'forties had appeared in a politically conscious colony. He was not entirely the product of St. Mary's society, and, refusing to be subservient to merchants or officials, he could not hold down a job in his restless state. But he was a useful element to the Societies for being literate. His ambition was to widen the rift already noticeable in the colony and precipitate a crisis out of which political rights might possibly be wrung.

Such a crisis came in December 1865 when a rumour reached the Governor of a plot to kill all the European inhabitants of Bathurst on Christmas Eve. Harry Finden, a small entrepreneur in the town, was accused before the Rev. Tyas of being ringleader of the conspiracy; though Governor d'Arcy declined to state on what grounds he based his allegations.[4] With the unanimous

1. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 21st June, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
2. Ibid. "Civic", Af.Times, November 1865.
3. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 21st July, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
4. Harry Finden to G.d'Arcy, 22nd Dec., 1865, African Times, March 1866; H.T.Cole, Af.Times, Jan.,1866; W.H.Goddard to d'Arcy, 16th Feb.,1866, Af.Times, March 1866; C.O. 87/83,1865,vol.2.24th Dec.,d'Arcy to Cardwell.

support of Executive Council, precautionary measures were taken - the troops called in from the Cape, and double sentries stationed at the Gunpowder Magazine.[1] Thomas Brown had strongly supported these measures in the Legislative Council, but not so Thomas Quin.[2] And on Goddard's return to the settlement from leave, he acted as mediator between Governor and people, stating that from his long residence among the Africans, he could not for a moment believe "that any such treasonable ideas were ever entertained or spoken of, in their Clubs or elsewhere."[3] Yet Quin had some time before been taken into the confidence of Finden who had warned him that if he did not use his influence with the Governor and Council to redress the wrongs of the African community, he could no longer restrain the people.[4] The Gambia certainly seemed to provide all the conditions for a revolt in the mid 'sixties.[5] And colonial Governments everywhere were on the alert for revolts on the pattern of the Jamaica Insurrection of 1865.

Independence from the Governor and Council of Sierra Leone had not been altogether a success, although it had provided experience for the mercantile community in local self-government. Some of them had enjoyed the privilege of participating in the debates of the local legislature, and in giving judgment in the Magistrate's court. Indeed, to a merchant like Thomas Brown

1. C.O. 87/83, 1865, vol.2. 24th Dec., d'Arcy to Cardwell.
2. C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. 17th Feb., d'Arcy to W.H.Goddard.
3. C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. 16th Feb., Goddard to d'Arcy.
4. C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. 17th Feb., d'Arcy to Goddard.
5. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 21st July, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
   Explosive incidents:- The death of an apprentice on board the Colonial Steamer; The assault of Harry Finden in his shop by two European Medical Officers. Editor on "Brutal and cowardly assault on a Native Agent of the African Times," Dec., 1866. Af. Times.

political identity was in process of being achieved. But in proportion as British merchants became satisfied with their status so did less privileged groups begin to resist any attempt to perpetuate mercantile domination in the political field for being an obstacle to their own political evolution.

Colonel Ord's recommendation for a centralization policy in the West African settlements was therefore welcomed by urbanised Africans in Bathurst as a means to freedom. A return to a dependent status would reduce the power of the ruling Clique under Thomas Brown, nicknamed unofficial "Governor" of the Gambia. While the Secretary of State might not be in a position to estimate the harm done by such a Clique, a Governor-in-Chief, who would visit the territory periodically could effect changes by acting "with strict justice both to the rich and poor."[1] It was a recommendation strongly supported in the African Times by its ever vigilant Editor Fitzgerald who thought a Governor-General would "be removed from these local influences which but too often prejudically bias or control the decisions of a resident Governor."[2]

Meanwhile, the merchants mustered their forces (and within it they herded their clerks and employees) to defend what they had gained. "Gambian"'s letter to the African Times explained that being a dependent mercantile clerk, he had been compelled to sign a memorial drawn by the leading merchants "who expect to lose their wicked influence here were this made a sub-government";

1. "Civic" in African Times, November 1865.
2. Editor, Af. Times, Sept., 1865.

for the government in St. Mary's was "in their hands."[1] "Under the cloak of Magistrates they would flock to the Court on any case affecting a European, or an intelligent native who is an object of their hatred or displeasure, and twist the law to suit their prejudice, giving no justice to natives ...."[2] Extreme as this indictment against the unofficial government in St. Mary's appears, it was nevertheless typical of letters that were reaching London for publication in the Press. They were at least guides to public opinion in the settlement, and indicated the extent to which the Governor had become "a puppet" (to use d'Arcy's own phrase) in the hands of a powerful oligarchy.

Colonel Ord's reasons for proposing the centralization of the West African settlements were not exactly those put forward by all who found it attractive. The Enquiry into the settlements had been necessitated by a declining revenue, and the humiliation attending the 1863 Ashantee invasion on the Gold Coast;[3] and the Commissioner found "a want of a regular and well-defined system of administration", and the absence of a uniform Native policy, basic deficiencies. For this he proposed a pattern of Government modelled on that of the smaller West Indian colonies of which he had experience. Expenditure in the settlements would only be effectively reduced to meet revenue, and thus limit the financial burdens imposed on the Imperial Treasury,

1. "A Gambian", Af. Times, Sept., 1865.
2. "A Gambian", Af. Times, Sept., 1865.
3. J.D.Fage, "Introduction to the History of West Africa", (C.U.P., 1959) p.135; Dike, "Trade and Politics", p.167.

if the settlements were placed under the supervision of a common authority on the Coast.[1] This would in effect enable each colony to administer its laws and revenue, but "subject only to the approval of the Governor-in-Chief."[2] It was a solution which received the approval of the Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider Ord's Report.

To literate Africans in those settlements, Ord's greatest contribution was his recommendation for the gradual introduction of self-government into the West African colonies -[3] a recommendation that had been accepted in principle by the British Government. Dependence upon Sierra Leone in the 'sixties was to be very different in complexion from what it had been twenty years before, when pressure groups in all the settlements were almost exclusively European and Mulatto. It was going to require much tact and wisdom to steer a safe course between the Scylla of oligarchies and the Charybdis of the masses in politically conscious territories, where a fragmentation process in society had been recently accelerated.

By Royal Commission dated 19th February 1866, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Lagos were merged into one government, under a Governor-in-Chief resident in Sierra Leone. The Gambia retained its separate Legislature, but the title of the Officer in charge of the Administration was changed to Administrator. In further implementation of Ord's Recommendations, orders were given for the final abandonment of MacCarthy

1. C.O. 267/286, March 1865, "Report on the Western Coast of Africa", vol.4. by Colonel H. St. George Ord, R.E., Governor of Bermuda.
2. C.O. 267/286, Ord Report 1865.
3. "An African of Sierra Leone" on "Self-Government at Sierra Leone," African Times, Nov. 1865.

Island, the troops being withdrawn in 1866, and from St. Mary's in 1870. Merchants and inhabitants saw this predicament as involving the defence of the settlement and therefore its commercial prosperity. Following upon withdrawal came renewed French interest in the River Gambia. Under such unsettling conditions, it was unlikely that dependence on another Government would simplify the Gambia's internal problems. In short, the newly establishe centralized Government was doomed to failure from its inception.

Within three years of its establishment, the Editorial of the Freetown newspaper - West African Liberator - was discussing the "complete and disastrous failure" of centralization in West Africa, which, far from bringing benefit to the settlements "has only brought suffering on them all ... and [Sierra Leone] ... has turned out, as usual, to be the greatest of the sufferers."[1] The Gambia, however, found that it was its interests that were invariably subordinated to those of Sierra Leone, particularly under the governorship of Sir A.E. Kennedy.

Under the new constitution, unofficial representation in the Legislative Council had been reduced to one; and the new Administrator, Admiral Patey, was more inclined to make his Private Secretary, Henry Fowler, his confidant, than the influential Thomas Brown, who had retained his seat in Council on d'Arcy's recommendation. Brown now found his sphere of influence circumscribe by officialdom; indeed he was often ignored by Patey, whose despatches were given more serious consideration by Colonial Office Officials than had

1. Editor, West African Liberator (Sierra Leone) 5th Sept. 1869, quoted by a Gambia Creole on "Administration from Sierra Leone", African Times, January 1871.

d'Arcy's. He was, after all, Mr. Cardwell's brother-in-law; and Brown by this time was known as an agitator.

Brown did not so easily accept his personal loss of political power. In 1869, the year of the terrible Cholera scourge, he used the confused state into which the settlement was thrown to expose the Administrator's shortcomings producing evidence to denounce Patey's utter failure to check the spread of the disease, thus causing great injury to the poorer inhabitants who fell victims to it. In this attack he received support from business associates inside and outside the colony.[1] T.F. Quin who had just retired to London wrote to the Colonial Office in the same vein;[2] and even officials, Hastings Kneller the Collector of Customs, Dr. Jeans, the Colonial Surgeon, and Mr. Chalmers the Chief Magistrate, failed to give support to Patey's administration[3]

Still without representation in the Legislature, Africans were alert to views expressed in and outside the colony and now had other means of disputing or supporting such views. By 1869, they were not entirely dependent on Fitzgerald to fight their battles, for Reffell in London could make direct contact with the Colonial Office whenever circumstances required it. For this reason he was kept posted with current news of the colony, just as Quin was in touch with mercantile opinion there for the purpose of making representation too.

1. C.O. 87/92, 1869, vol.2. 8th June, Merchants' Memorial to Earl Granville.
2. C.O. 87/95, 1869, vol.5. 19th July, T.F.Quin to Earl Granville.
3. C.O. 87/91, 1869, vol.1. 12th Feb., A.E.Kennedy to Earl Granville:- "On a review of these proceedings ... I cannot but regard them as an attempt on the part of Mr. Kneller, Dr. Jeans, and Mr. Chalmers to embarrass and bring discredit upon the Administrator ...."

From the point of view of the Africans it was worthwhile to accommodate a Government that was impartial even if it did not encourage political aspirations. Reffell's letter to Lord Granville in September 1869 in part expressed African tactics. While accepting Patey's faults, he pointed to his "love for justice" which was of greater importance to "down-trodden African inhabitants of Bathurst", and for which reason no petitions against the administration had emanated from that sector. He described Brown and Kneller as "perfect tyrants to the African inhabitants ... when they were in power." Now, divested of privileges they formerly enjoyed, they naturally harboured a grievance against the new Administrator "who would not allow himself to be dictated by their prejudice feeling in the management of the Government ...."[1] Reffell himself bore a personal grievance against Kneller, who, when acting Administrator in 1867 had introduced laws into the settlement which denied him admission into the courts as legal practitioner with inadequate qualifications.

The new arrangements under Sierra Leone likewise reduced the powers of the local courts, the offices of Chief Justice and Queen's Advocate having been abolished, the Chief Justice of Sierra Leone was required to make an annual circuit to the settlement. But a petition of 1876 complained that no circuit had been made to the Gambia "since the recommendations of the 1865 Committee, notwithstanding the Judicial Establishment was reduced to one officer on that understanding ...."[2] The problems of a legal officer acting in numerous capacities had not changed; but added to them was disaffection

1. Jos. Reffell to Earl Granville, 4th Sept. 1869, published African Times, October 1869.
2. C.O. 87/109, 1876, 29th April, Merchants' Petition to Earl Carnavon.

which arose from the abolition of voluntary Magistrates.[1] Governor Kennedy, however, thought this was beneficial to the colony since it did away with the inconvenience of merchants adjudicating on their own cases.

These men had welcomed the abolition of Trial by Jury in civil cases in all West African settlements by ordinance of 1866.[2] For European merchants had long bemoaned the injustice administered by prejudiced jurors, many of whom were their own traders and dealers. Indeed, it was due to constant complaints of slave-dealing among civilized Africans in the Rivers of West Africa that convinced General Sam Blackall, the then Governor-in-Chief, "of the necessity of the proposed alterations ... the abolition of the Grand Juries ... [to] teach these slave dealers that they can no longer reckon upon exemption from punishment through the connivance of corrupt Juries."[3] Ord had also reported a strong suspicion against African traders and agents dealing in slaves at a distance from the settlements.

It was in the Sierra Leone legislature that the Bill to effect abolition had been hastily passed in one sitting, without first having been published before the First Reading, as unofficials in that settlement complained.[4] Protest was concentrated there since no opportunity offered in the Gambia for debate. As before, it was obliged to accept whatever acts were passed for it

1. 1869 Ordinance - "providing for the duties hitherto performed by two J.Ps to be undertaken by the Chief Magistrate". C.O. 87/93, 1869, vol.3. 12th August, Brown, Goddard, Quin to Earl Granville.
2. C.O. 87/119, 1882, vol.2. 27th Nov., A.E.Havelock to Earl Kimberley:- A deputation of African inhabitants of Bathurst submitted a Memorial against the enactment of an Ordinance, substituting for Trial by Jury in certain criminal cases, a tribunal composed of the Chief Magistrate and two Assessors or two J.Ps.
3. C.O. 87/87, 1867, vol.1. 15th January, Governor Sam Blackall to Lord Carnavon.
4. Memorial of Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, pub. Af.Times, January 1867.

by the superior legislature outside the settlement. In London, Fitzgerald remonstrated against an Act which robbed "the African on his own soil of every vestige of citizenship ... a strange beginning of preparation of the people for self-government."[1]

Africans panicked when a year later an ordinance was introduced in the Legislative Council at St. Mary's for further amendments to the laws relevant to Jurors and Juries.[2] The object of it being, as the Chief Magistrate explained, "to develop and carry out the spirit of the legislation begun by the Ordinance of 26th November 1866",[3] that which abolished Trial by Jury. Following the precedent of the Sierra Leone legislature, the Gambia planned to raise the standard of qualification of Jurors by the new legislation, on the argument that the material wealth of the colony had very much increased since the Jury Ordinance of 1845 was drawn up.[4] It was also the object of the 1867 bill to raise the status of the Bar by encouraging qualified legal practitioners to enrol themselves, especially as the Court could exercise more efficient control over the professional conduct of regular practitioners than of temporary agents. A qualification test for enrolment would be some guarantee against improbity.[5] Liberated Africans interpreted this as a deliberate attempt to keep out their kinsfolk Reffell who had returned to the

1. F.Fitzgerald. Af. Times, December 1866.
2. C.O. 87/89, 1868, vol.1. 14th Dec., Hastings Kneller to A.E.Kennedy.
3. C.O. 87/89, 1868, vol.1. 11th April, Kennedy to Duke of Buckingham - enclosure, Notes on Ordinance by D.M.Chalmers, 27th March 1868.
4. C.O. 87/89, 1868, vol.1. Colonial Office Minute, 7th Feb., T.F.Elliott to Sir F.Rogers:- Qualifications of Jurors.
5. C.O. 87/89, 1868, vol.1. 27th March, Chalmers to Kennedy.

Gambia from his studies in London.[1] Even Governor Kennedy was suspicious of the Kneller-Brown Bill, and deprecated "the practice adopted by Acting Administrators at the Gambia of altering the Law and passing Ordinances, except in cases of urgent necessity ...."[2]

The situation in the Gambia had become untenable by the 'seventies, relations between Government and people having deteriorated. Thomas Brown and his associates saw no advantage to be derived from a subordinate status fraught with problems. While the 1865 Committee had anticipated and in principle provided for some of them, in practice, the implementation of Recommendations had not always followed the lines laid out. For instance, inspite of improved sea communication between the settlements, the Governor's visits to the Gambia were spasmodic; and naturally this was taken for indifference to the interests of that settlement.[3]

Opposition therefore hardened against the local Administrator who was seen as a tool of a disinterested Governor. To ease growing tension in St. Mary's, the Secretary of State was obliged to remove Brown's henchmen from the colony - Mr. Chalmers the Chief Magistrate, Hastings Kneller the Collector of Customs, and Dr. Jeans, Colonial Surgeon.[4] Brown nevertheless persisted

1. Joseph Reffell to Earl Granville, 4th Sept. 1869, pub. African Times, October 1869.
2. "... of altering the Laws and passing Ordinances ..." C.O. 87/89, 1868, vol.1. 11th April, Kennedy to Buckingham.
3. C.O. 87/102, 1872, vol.1. 2nd March, T.Brown to Lord Kimberley.
4. C.O. 87/91, 1869, vol.1. 10th June, A.E.Kennedy to Earl Granville; C.O. 87/92, 1862, vol.2. 13th July and 9th August, Kennedy to Patey.

in opposition, provoking the acting Administrator in 1873 to expostulate that he had no experience of unofficial members of Council in other colonies repeatedly addressing the Secretary of State "in the tone assumed by Mr. Brown, ... but it appears," he added, "to have become a recognised thing in this settlement and it leads persons in the settlement to believe that Mr. Brown's functions are of an executive rather than a legislative character ...."[1]

By the late 'seventies, all communities in St. Mary's were united against a system of government that had quite obviously proved a failure; and in his shrewdness, Brown utilized unifying forces created by the French bogey of the mid-seventies for motivating a heterogeneous society to common action. The separation of the Gold Coast and Lagos from Sierra Leone was a further incentive for Gambian demands. Among the petitioners of a memorial of 1876 were British and French merchants, Liberated African entrepreneurs, a scattering of European and African civil servants, and other representatives. They exposed the anomalous position in which their colony was placed, by which they were compelled to make annual financial contributions to certain services in Sierra Leone without deriving any benefits.[2] Among them an annual contribution of £500 towards the salary of a Governor-in-Chief[3] who rarely visited the Gambia (Kennedy had not paid a visit since 1869!); nearly £300 p.a. contributed towards his yacht "Sherbro" which was to facilitate inter-colonial communication but which only visited the Gambia once between 1869

1. C.O. 87/104, 1873, vol.1. 24th March, H.T.M.Cooper to A.E.Kennedy.
2. C.O. 87/109, 1876, 29th April, Petition to Lord Carnavon.
3. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1.N.B. 2nd June, C.O. Minute, S.Wingfield to Sir H. Holland.

and 1876.[1] It was an inventory of unfulfilled promises and bad debts, in which the inefficiency and inconvenience of the legal machinery, increased expenditure without a corresponding increase in the number of representatives of the taxpaying community in Council, figured prominently.

A.W. Hemming of the Colonial Office thought there was good ground for complaint. "The argument for centralization," he wrote in a minute, "drawn from the experience of the West Indies ... appears ... to be founded on false premises. The circumstances of the two cases are so very different."[2] He suggested that it would be an advantage for the Gambia to be placed in direct correspondence with the Home Government. For though it was within thirteen days of steam communication with Liverpool, despatches took about six weeks to reach it via Sierra Leone, and another six weeks before the Administrator's reply by the same route could reach the Colonial Office. The earnest desire of the colonists was for "a separate and a permanent Government, one that shall inspire the confidence of the community and the respect of the surrounding natives ...." It was pathetic that they should have been asking for protection and for assistance to open up the River and the interior to "Christianity, Civilization, and Commerce"[3], sixty years after the foundation of St. Mary's Island.

With the 1876 memorial submitted, Thomas Brown continued to agitate against the state of affairs in the Gambia through the British press,

1. C.O. 87/102, 1872, vol.1. 2nd March, Thomas Brown to Lord Kimberley; C.O. 87/109, 1876, 6th July, Colonial Office Minute, A.W.L.Hemming.
2. C.O. 87/109, 1876, 6th July, A.W.Hemming.
3. C.O. 87/109, 1876, 29th April, Petition to Lord Carnavon.

particularly the Liverpool Mercury.[1] He had resigned from the Council in 1874.[2] But nothing was immediately done to alleviate conditions in the colony. The appointment of an unqualified person as Chief Magistrate[3] had been a major cause for the storm of protest in 1877; Mr. Adolphus had to be removed. The colony continued to meet heavy financial commitments to Sierra Leone inspite of a diminishing revenue. In 1884 it contributed £1900 towards the purchase of another yacht to facilitate the visits of the Governor, but no visit was made between that date and 1886.[4] Brown did not live to see some of the new changes towards political identity for the Gambia to which he had devoted the greater part of his public life. He died and was buried in Bathurst in 1882.

A significant change however came with the reconstruction of the Legislative Council under Administrator V.S. Gouldsbury. Between 1882 and 1888, three unofficials were appointed to the Council, two of them being Liberated African entrepreneurs - J.D. Richards[5] and S.J. Forster.[6] The colony was created a separate colony by Letters Patent transmitted on the 30th November 1888; and thus ended a protracted struggle for political identity. Changing policies towards the problem of Government in a small and insolvent

1. C.O. 87/110, 1877, Cuttings from Liverpool Mercury, 21st May, 13th August, 6th Sept., etc.; 28th Sept. 1877. Letter from Thomas Brown to Lord Carnavon.
2. C.O. 87/110, 1877, 19th April, Colonial Office Minute, Hemming to Mr. Meade.
3. C.O. 87/109, 1876, 22nd December, Petition, for a qualified Judge, to Carnavon.
4. J.M. Gray, "History", p.460.
5. C.O. 87/133, 1888, vol.2. 10th Sept. G.T.Carter to Lord Knutsford.
6. C.O. 87/126, 1886, vol.2. 5th August, I.J.Hay to Hon. Edward Stanhope.

colony had delayed its emergency as a working political entity, under the immediate control of local officials and unofficials. Internal tensions of a diversified society were a consequence of smallness, aggravated by the disparity in the development of racial groups there; and this had not promoted political growth. By 1888, as the result of educational and economic forces, the African community in St. Mary's was adequately equipped for participation in government with European officials and merchants. But the settlement may very well have drifted on as before if the Berlin Conference of 1885 had not heralded a new era in the history of West Africa. French colonial expansion on the borders of the Gambia made it necessary to define spheres of influence; and only an 'independent' Gambia under its own Governor and Council could deal with the urgent problems of the late nineteenth century.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROBLEMS OF AN UNSTABLE ECONOMY 1816-1888.

A limited revenue was the most constant factor in the Gambia settlement throughout the nineteenth century, and the root of its problems. In the early years of the settlement all elements had been optimistic about potential trade and good prospects for an expanding revenue. When expectations failed to be realized while the growing financial responsibilities of Government imposed heavy burdens on the taxpaying minority in Bathurst, frustrations and tensions became the characteristic features of relationship between government and people. Indeed the struggle for political emancipation had been intimately bound up with the economic problems of the settlement. For an economy dependent upon a non-economic crop like the groundnut could not enjoy the stability required for steady growth.

Generally, its smallness had deprived it of the same extent of imperial aid enjoyed by the other settlements on the Coast; so that no Parliamentary Grant was provided for some years after its foundation.[1] Even the erection of public buildings - the Government House, the Military Barracks, the Hospital and the Gaol - had been provided out of public funds collected from the mercantile community.[2] Nor were British merchants unwilling to meet such responsibilities at first, for they knew it had not been the intention

1. C.O. 267/66, 1825, vol.2. 8th July, Charles Turner to Bathurst.
2. C.O. 267/58, 1823, vol.1. 18th June, C.MacCarthy to Lord Bathurst.

of Lord Bathurst or the British Government to establish anything more elaborate than a military post on St. Mary's Island. That was why they expended large sums in building themselves the kind of settlement they required for the pursuit of trade, out of which they contributed towards the running of a civil establishment.[1]

Until the 'sixties, import duties collected from the mercantile community comprised the greater part of the annual revenue. Policy initiated by the Governor and Council of Sierra Leone was based on high import duties, an important reason why merchants of St. Mary's agitated for a local government empowered to formulate its own fiscal policy that would encourage British trade. For with French Albreda conducting an extensive contraband trade in the River, large deficits were created in the revenue.[2] If British merchants were not themselves engaged in evading customs duties, they defrauded the Colonial Chest by systematically refusing to pay duties in silver coins (which were in short supply), and using instead 'Promissory Notes' received by the Government at the rate of £1 sterling each, but only accepted again by the merchants in payment of debts at 17/4d. each. Such was the loss involved that Government was obliged to buy all Notes with a loan from Sierra Leone in 1826.[3]

When Dr. Madden visited the Gambia in 1841, he found that the 2% ad valorem duty on general imports had been raised to 3%, that tobacco still carried an extra tax of $\frac{1}{4}$d. per lb., and spirits a duty of 1/- instead of 6d.

1. C.O. 87/1, 6th May 1828, Merchants' Memorial to Lord Bathurst.
2. See Chapter III of Thesis.
3. C.O. 267/72, 1826, vol.2. 28th June, K.Macaulay to Bathurst. Promissory Notes were first issued by Lt.-Col. Alexander Grant with the approval of Governor MacCarthy for the purpose of carrying out a programme for public works:- C.O. 267/66, 1825, vol.2. 1st July, Turner to Bathurst; 25th Nov. A.Grant to Bathurst.

per gallon as before.[1] These, together with Tonnage and Harbour dues, and minor items of Quit Rents and spirit Licences, made up the total revenue. With such limitations, it was not difficult for expenditure to disturb the finances of the settlement, whereupon public protest against waste and misappropriation of funds was aroused. Since public works were dependent on funds and on the skills of experts, it was not surprising that ten years after the foundation of St. Mary's no Court House or Secretary's Office had been built, nor a Market or Wharf as late as 1842. Madden found the lack of engineering skill in the colony a cause for the striking absence of public buildings there, and pointed to the wastage of public funds occasioned by the current policy of employing "any merchant's clerk who might be considered an Architectural Amateur as the Colonial Architect and Civil Engineer." In 1839, a newly built market costing £602 had fallen down. The same fate had befallen the barracks at MacCarthy Island; and the Government House at Bathurst which had cost between £8000 and £10,000 to erect had been blown down by a Tornado, repairs subsequently amounting to an extra £3000.[2]

This short-sighted policy in the Gambia of embarking on projects under the supervision of unqualified persons persisted as long as the revenue remained static or declined, and was a major factor in its halting development. The perennial problem of Drainage was certainly one that demanded high technical knowledge and skill, if it was to be efficiently tackled; but here, too, it was left to successive Administrators to use their ingenuity, rather than to

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 30th November, Charles Grant, Thomas Brown & others to Lord Stanley.
2. C.O. 267/173, 1841, Madden Report.

experts, simply because the Colonial Chest could not bear the burden. Governor d'Arcy, with experience of the swamps of Bombay and Demerara, showed a great interest in the drainage of St. Mary's, himself undertaking the supervision of the construction of an embankment by convict labour, and of sluice gates. He always hoped to tackle the Pontine Marsh which practically divided the Island into two halves in the rains, and made existence on the island precarious, but funds were not available.[1]

This was a serious state of affairs, for upon the efficient working of a drainage scheme depended the health of all communities on the Island. British merchants with profits to spend at the end of a trade season took their leave of the Island during the rainy months. This in itself was an uneconomic procedure where profits were consumed by annual holidays to Europe. Indeed, Governor Kennedy was to emphasize that if the occupation of the Gambia was to be continued, "no effort should be spared to render it habitable for Europeans; for upon their energy and capital its progress and prosperity must depend."[2] Africans who were in no position to withdraw from sodden huts and flooded streets in the rains died off, or grew debilitated by fevers (in fact, malaria, which was not yet discovered), thus reducing the economic output of the settlement for three to four months every year.

1. G.d'Arcy - Report to the Leg. Co. on Dykes and Drains, 30th July 1864, pub. African Times, Feb. 1865, and June 1865.
2. C.O. 87/89, 1868, vol.1. 1st Sept. Kennedy to Duke of Buckingham.

These were some of the features of the economic background to the chronic financial situation of the 'sixties and 'seventies. Though the sources of revenue had increased by then, and a more complex fiscal system had emerged embracing French merchants and Liberated African entrepreneurs, the demands on public funds had also multiplied. In particular, the Civil List had grown out of all proportion to the size of the settlement, thereby providing further cause for mercantile disaffection. While British merchants held the initiative in the organization of trade, on which the revenue still depended, and while they alone were directly represented in the Legislature, they were in a favourable position to put pressure on those who controlled taxation. Final controlling power really lay with the Imperial Treasury, whose distant hand on the purse strings was always alert to halt public expenditure. For this reason, the views on the Treasury Officers and those of the mercantile body in St. Mary's did not often agree; nor did this facilitate the Herculean task of the Governor on the spot who was blamed by the merchants for overtaxing citizens without embarking upon adequate development programmes. The extent of imperial control was implied in a Colonial Office minute of 1868 in answer to mercantile opposition to certain items of expenditure: "I do not see that we need let Mr. Brown determine how money is to be spent in a Colony receiving Imperial aid ...."[1]

The change in the economy of the Gambia from a trade in interior commodities (which were taxed upon entering England), to a staple crop in groundnuts, directly affected the revenue of the settlement; and altered

1. C.O. 87/89, 1868, vol.1. 3rd November, C.O. Minute - no signature.

the pattern of duties from an import to an export basis. The immediate reason for the change in the pattern of taxation was the growing prosperity of French merchants whom the free navigation of the Gambia River had provided with opportunities for extensive trade. As the Queen's Advocate explained to the Legislative Council during the debate of 1857, the French gained advantages in trade because as the law stood, they could "take money up in their vessels upon which they pay no duty, but goods upon which duties are payable they cannot take up, hence they are forced to take money...." An export duty would fall fairly upon all merchants, and increase the revenue; but this was objectionable to the Colonial Office on the principle that such a duty would fall heavily on the industrious producer, while relieving the other portion of the community from contributing to the maintenance of the Government. Officials and unofficials in Council were, however, unanimous in support of the tax on nuts. Dr. Robertson, the Colonial Secretary, showed that in the Gambia, the consumer was generally the same as the producer, in consequence of which the Government had been mainly supported, not by an import or export tariff but "by what we should strictly speaking call a transit duty ...." The native producer he said was taxed equally for the support of the Government "whether you tax the goods passing up the River or the produce passing downwards." But an export duty had the advantage of being easy and cheap to collect.[1]

Edward Bocock and W.H.Goddard, merchants in Council, were far more concerned with opposing the threat of higher import duties that would only

1. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. Legislative Council Minutes for 30th December, 1857.

"induce the merchants to cease the importation of goods and to purchase produce with money," than with showing enthusiasm for an alternative means of taxation. In fact, Governor O'Connor complained of the lukewarmness of the response to his invitation for comments on his tariff proposals from the commercial community. He had proposed an export tax of 11/8d. per ton of nuts; Goddard thought about 10/- per ton would be a fair figure. It was to take five years, however, to establish a new fiscal system for the Gambia.[1]

Those five years were to show the deficiency in the revenue that was the direct result of the importation of French cash (the French dollar being "highly appreciated in all regions of Africa ...."). Governor d'Arcy estimated that in 1860 nearly £40,000 value in goods had been shut out by cash, injuring import duties to a considerable degree, which for that year only amounted to £2,000. Two years before, revenue collected from this source had been £3,500.[2] The colony had reached another of its economic hurdles, and d'Arcy, taking a long term view of the situation, saw no reason for the optimism of his predecessor. He found in the colony "no less than seven firms have closed during the last two years with liabilities amounting to something like £50,000 or £60,000 to the Home Capitalists ... [who] are consequently chary of making further advances."[3]

It was therefore the worst moment to embark on a war against Baddibu to secure indemnity for British merchants who had suffered severe losses in

1. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. Leg. Co. Minutes for 30th Dec. 1857.
2. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 19th January, Governor O'Connor to Newcastle.
3. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. 18th October, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

that state. The result was to be a war debt of £2,500 (an enormous figure in comparison with the annual revenue), merchants who had furnished vessels for the war pressing for payment, and the Colonial Chest groaning under the added burden of locating a party of Liberated Africans newly arrived from Sierra Leone.[1] But merchants caught up in the cross-currents of economic change of the mid nineteenth century did not lose the resilience which was characteristic of their community. It was their faith in the River trade and its possibility of sometime expanding the revenue that kept them in the commercial field for the greater part of the century.

It would be wrong to suppose that import duties were no longer a feature of the Gambia economy, for apart from tobacco and spirits which were always dutiable imports, a comparable article of luxury had now appeared on the market. This was the kola nut which was to the Liberated African entrepreneur what groundnut was to the European merchant, his main source of income in the River trade. As Islam swept over the country in the nineteenth century, so it opened up new markets for kola, a cheap and inocuous stimulant, drastically reducing the consumption of spiritous liquors. By 1861, African entrepreneurs had shown a preference for the trade in local foodstuffs in which they could participate with fairly small capital. When, therefore, the ill-consequences of the Baddibu War compelled the Government to look for new sources of revenue, British merchants being reluctant to make further contribution to Public Funds, it was to the African sector that it turned, "acting upon the principle

1. C.O. 87/71, 1861, 9th April, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

that as the Liberated Africans have hitherto enjoyed the advantages of British subjects, they must now in all fairness share the burthen."[1]

In 1861 the tax was 10/- a bly. of 3 cwt. of nuts, and it was to bring a revenue of about £300 p.a.,[2] but by 1863 it was making a substantial contribution of £500 to £600 p.a. to the revenue.[3] Even this was regarded by European merchants as minimal compared with the burden of taxation which fell upon them. It was in this mood that Thomas Brown as Acting Queen's Advocate framed the 1865 tariff, which bore his name, and carried extra import duties on kola and sugar (5/- per bly. and 1d. per lb. extra respectively), and an extra duty of 3d. per gallon on palm wine.[4] It was a Bill "so framed as to fall on the French merchants, the Aku traders of Sierra Leone, and the Aku women of this town, who buy the palmwine from the wild Jola and retail it ...." d'Arcy, impressed by Brown's arguments, forwarded the Ordinance which Council had passed unanimously and which he himself found acceptable.[5] The Colonial Office, however, was not favourably impressed, being "suspicious of Mr. Brown's Tariff", knowing that the Governor was "so much in the hands of his Council, where the mercantile element rules supreme."[6]

The Liberated African economy had emerged as a recognisable pattern woven into the economic fabric of the settlement; and as facilities of steam

1. C.O. 87/71, 1861, 22nd April, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. Ibid.
3. C.O. 87/79, 1864, 1st January, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
4. Blue Book for 1858: Palmwine Revenue amounted to £733.10.9d.
5. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 17th May, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
6. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 22nd June, C.O. Minute - no signature.

communication with Sierra Leone improved in the second half of the century, so their prosperity was assured, though it did not go beyond that of small business men. In terms of capital, their diversified trade was only modest. As has been shown, they were not excluded from the groundnut trade, but it was as sole organizers of the kola trade and its ancillaries in palmoil, rice, yams and corn, that they found recognition in the community in St. Mary's. In a real sense, this was their emancipation from tutelage, and a moment of great achievement when their former European employers recognised them as equals in the commercial field capable of making substantial contributions to the Revenue. Kola certainly penetrated the far interior, increasing in value at every station"until at MacCarthy Island the bly. is worth from £18 to £20," the cost price at Sierra Leone varying from £8 to £11, with freight charges of 8/- to 12/- a bly.[1] It was a commodity which threatened some of the interests of the established merchant, kola nut being "more necessary to the natives than tobacco,"[2] which, with rum, used to be consumer goods in greatest demand in the River. As retailers of foodstuffs then, Liberated Africans reaped fair profits.

These Africans met the challenge of the 'sixties in good faith, so that the Collector of Customs was able to report that once the Ordinance on the kola tax had been passed in 1861, its implementation had been easy, and the tax collected without difficulty. It is worth noticing, too, that in 1865 the Council passed an Ordinance for raising the Licence on Spirit or 'Grog'

1. C.O. 87/71, 1861, 19th July, Hastings Kneller to G. d'Arcy.
2. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 17th May, d'Arcy to Cardwell.

shops from £30 to £50 p.a. with the same object of swelling the revenue, and of reducing drunkenness in St. Mary's.[1] It was a tax almost exclusively collected from the Liberated African community, a substantial number of whom, like Harry Finden, were making a living from retailing imported spirits. Through this, and by other trades, a few Africans had acquired a small degree of economic independence, which enabled them further to increase the volume of trade in the Settlement. In their effect, the tariff laws of the 'sixties were a test to the economic strength of the African community; that taxation did not cause the collapse of their system of trade was indication that taxation was not unfair, and evidence of buoyancy and a large degree of stability in this emerging commercial group.

Typical of the Gambia revenue, tariff laws were incapable of making any dramatic change in its character; and revenue could not meet the growing demands of increasing expenditure. Inspite of all resistance, it was found necessary to revise the fiscal system further so as to provide taxation both from imports and exports.[2] In 1866 ad valorem duties at 2% were reimposed on all imported goods, while the duty on the staple crop was not abolished.[3] Among the new duties was an item aimed at French merchants - the duty of 4/- per 1000 bricks, such building materials being only imported in French vessels from France into the colony.

1. C.O. 87/82, 1865, 18th June, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
2. This was among Colonel Ord's Recommendations for the Settlement.
3. C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. T.F. Quin's Memorial to Cardwell.

While unofficials were willing to support the new tariff for three years, they resisted Admiral Patey's attempt to secure its re-enactment in 1869 "for another period of three years."[1] European merchants and African traders made representation to Thomas Brown, by now their only member in Council, against the continuance of "so excessive a tax upon the Imports", which they could only regard"as a great breach of faith on the part of the Administrator and Council." They argued that the purpose for which the Ordinance had been passed in 1866 had been so far carried out as to have provided a surplus of over £9000 in 1868, the greater portion of which lay "idle in the hands of the Colonial Treasurer."

In their opinion there was no point in taxation for the sake of shewing "a large and useless surplus ... whilst our roads which cost so much to construct, and were one of the causes of our getting into debt in past years, are neglected and allowed to go to ruin."[2] One merchant, Thomas Chown Jnr., in a personal protest to the Administrator alleged that for the years 1867-68 his firm "being the largest contributor to the Colonial Revenue ... [had paid] upward of £6000 for duties."[3] Opposition was not simply the result of Patey's unpopularity with the mercantile community, but the obvious dilemma which faced Government and taxpaying citizens was to decide what margin to allow for a surplus revenue fund. While the interests of the two parties differed, agreement on this vital issue could not be reached.

1. C.O. 87/92, 1869, vol.2. 3rd June, Patey to Kennedy.
2. C.O. 87/92, 1869, vol.2. 30th March, Letter of Principal inhabitants to T.Brown.
3. C.O. 87/92, 1869, vol.2. 23rd March, Thomas Chown Jnr. to Patey.

Such divergence of opinion often meant that taxes imposed by the Government were not collected from the more influential merchants. An official report on the Customs Department in Bathurst in 1869 disclosed "a great laxity of practice in the collection of the Revenue ... [which] is defrauded to a very considerable extent ...." The Collector, Kneller, in close alliance with a mercantile clique dominated by Thomas Brown, showed gross errors in his Account Books; not only were they out of date, but there was evidence that only goods liable to specific duties were ever examined, and that certain duties on goods received by Goddard and Quin and other merchants had not been collected.[1] Brown and Quin were later implicated in two cases of smuggling in 1873, when Kneller's successor seized two schooners - the "Arabiston" and the "Atlanta", for evading Customs duties.[2] The merchants, determined to protect their interests, failed to understand that while a precarious revenue was exposed to so many hazards its enlargement was likely to remain uncertain.

These duties did not exhaust the sources of revenue in the settlement Harbour and Tonnage dues, Town Rates, and a Land Tax in British Combo made their own contribution, and provided many occasions for disagreement between Government and people. The first Rates Ordinance had been passed in 1850, by which property valued at £5 or upwards paid 4% p.a., and 3% if valued at less.[3] It proved one of the most irksome items of revenue to collect,

1. C.O. 87/91, 1869, vol.1. 12th March, A.Richmond's Report to A.E.Kennedy.
2. C.O. 87/105, 1873, vol.2. 21st July, H.T.M.Cooper to Lord Kimberley;
   C.O. 87/104, 1873, vol.1. 10th April, T.F.Quin to Kimberley;
   C.O. 87/106, 1873, vol.3. 10th April, Quin to Kimberley.
3. C.O. 87/74, 1862, 27th Sept., G.d'Arcy to Newcastle.

entailing the issue of hundreds of summonses against defaulters annually. In 1862, Harry Finden and 374 other African inhabitants of Bathurst made an appeal for the repeal of the unpopular Ordinance, for they complained that it fell heavily upon them, and had not produced any benefits to them since its implementation. Their districts remained low-lying and swampy, and they were compelled "to cleanse the streets as they were before the passing of the said Ordinance."[1] Such objections demonstrated the climate of opinion among this community; a general feeling of oppression was abroad - a feeling that those who lived in the front streets with amenities of street lamps and policemen on patrol at night had reason enough to pay rates. Many Africans had, therefore, refused to pay rates, and, according to their own account, others of them had migrated to the mainland to escape payment, for the high prices of provisions had exhausted their earnings.

Governor d'Arcy and successive Governors appeared to have accepted the validity of these complaints, and made representation to the Secretary of State on their behalf; but repeal was thought to be a retrospective step, since the tax was "very unobjectionable ... both in its amount and object."[2] Even when the finances of the Gambia improved and Administrator Kortright proposed an Ordinance to alter the Rates from 4% to 3%, and to exempt from tax all properties valued at less than £5,[3] the Colonial Office was of opinion

1. C.O. 87/74, 1862, Petition of Liberated Africans to d'Arcy.
2. C.O. 87/74, 1862, 15th November, C.O. Minute, G.B.
3. C.O. 87/107, 1874, 27th August, C.H.Kortright to Kennedy.

that "the revenue derived from these rates should not be sacrificed unless an urgent necessity for such a course can be shown."[1] Nor did the local legislature support any attempt to exempt the African community from paying rates, although Goddard was reported to be fully sympathetic to the hardships of the poorer citizens.

Rates had been originally imposed to provide a margin for urban development, and to provide the beginnings of a municipality. Indeed, section 21 of the 1850 law stipulated that an annual general meeting of the ratepayers should determine how the rates were to be expended.[2] The Government, however, seemed to have concentrated solely on collecting revenue to the exclusion of any training in civic life. It must have caused not a little embarrassment to the Governors who tried to relieve poor Blacks from taxes they could not pay, in face of opposition from their Councils and the Colonial Office, but their efforts in this direction derived from a conviction that prosperous Blacks were making adequate contribution to the revenue in other ways.

Harbour and Tonnage dues provided another source of revenue; and with the growth of the groundnut trade many more ships than before entered the harbour. At first the dues were imposed on an annual basis, but French merchants were suspected of attempting to evade the taxes by employing fine Clipper vessels which could make several voyages in one year. For that reason a new system based on tonnage was introduced, and in 1873 tonnage dues were raised from 2/- a ton p.a., to 1/6d. a ton every time a vessel entered

1. C.O. 87/107, 1874, 4th April, Carnavon to Kennedy.
2. C.O. 87/74, 1862, 15th November, C.O. Minute, G.B.

Bathurst. Its object was partly to dislocate the French carrying trade from the River; but Henry Helm, Agent for T.C. Chown, stood alone in the mercantile community in support of the Government's proposal to effect such a change. This, Helm believed, "would protect the English Firms and English vessels against the French, who just now have, if not all, but the most profits and benefits of this country."[1] Yet the issue of harbour and tonnage dues was far more complicated because the African Steamship Company's vessels (on which most of the merchants and all the African entrepreneurs depended for transporting their goods to Europe,) could afford to by-pass Bathurst whenever they felt these dues were in excess of the shipping business available in the Gambia. And interruptions to the sea mail were regarded by the merchants as disastrous to them, for isolation from markets was its consequence.[2]

For all these attempts at imposing and raising taxes in the Gambia, the economic picture remained the same, and expenditure continued to outstrip revenue. In the words of the Colonial Office: "The Revenue appears to have been of a capricious character, yet the Expenditure seems to have been kept at a steady figure."[3]

1. C.O. 87/107, 1874, 8th January, Henry Helm to C.H.Kortright.
2. See Chapter III of Thesis.
3. C.O. 87/93, 1869, vol.3. 4th August, Major Bravo to A.E.Kennedy.

The mercantile community had not been unaware of the hazards of an economy based on a single cash crop. Even before the groundnut trade had developed, they had made attempts to broaden the economy, with their schemes for the cultivation of hemp and cotton. Nor had the local Government been lacking in initiative in the same direction. Governor d'Arcy, who was faced with some of the colony's most serious financial problems, gave thought and energy to agricultural schemes. In 1862, he obtained a ton of Egyptian cotton seed from the Manchester Association, for distribution among French and British merchants in the colony. Liberated Africans working on a Government farm in British Combo planted the seed too.[1] In 1864, 200 cwt. of cotton was exported from the colony, with further requests for Government sponsorship. Both Quin and Brown showed great enterprise in cotton growing, the former exporting a "considerable quantity" to Germany, while the latter loaded the first "cotton ship" to leave the River with a cargo of 27,843 lbs. of cotton for the Liverpool market.[2] A few other attempts at exportation, however, soon proved the uneconomic nature of the new commodity. Merchants complained they could not make "the smallest profit on this article, after incurring all the expenses of freight to Europe." In any case European markets preferred ginned cotton.[3]

Experiments in cotton cultivation were a feature of the West African scene in the 'sixties and 'seventies, the Governments in Senegal and Sierra Leone attempting to stimulate cultivation[4] with little more success than the

1. C.O. 87/77, 1863, 25th Sept., d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/80, 1864, 18th Oct., d'Arcy to Newcastle.
3. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 10th Dec., d'Arcy to Blackall;
   C.O. 87/77, 1863, 25th Sept., d'Arcy to Newcastle.
4. Correspondent in the Af.Times, August 1864 - Sierra Leone Cotton Exhibitio
   November 1863 - Af. Times.

Gambia had had. Interest in the crop was sustained into the later nineteenth century, when more substantial sums were invested in agriculture by Governments and commercial interests. For a period, rubber exports from the Gambia raised the hopes of all concerned to diversify the economy; but this too proved a mere outburst of prosperity which did not last.[1] A Government Experimental Farm was started on Kotu Estate (formerly the property of the Lloyd-Evans senoras), under the supervision of a Curator from Kew Gardens. After some years at trying to improve rubber cultivation and agriculture in general, the Experimental Farm closed down for want of results.[2] It was not strange that so many projects in agriculture bore so little fruit, since there was no Agriculture Department in the colony before 1924.[3] But when all experiments failed the groundnut remained dominant.

So much so that the land on which the nut was grown in British territory - British Combo and MacCarthy Island - came to be taxed as a result of representations made by mercantile members in Council. When discussion on expenditure for these dependencies had come up in 1858, Thomas Chown Snr. had then proposed that landowners and merchants in those areas should be liable to pay rates to meet current expenditure on roads and bridges.[4] The then Colonial Secretary, Dr. Robertson, objected to such a view, since he argued the dependencies contributed to the general revenue by paying customs duties,

1. Correspondent, on "India-Rubber", Bathurst Observer, April 1883.
2. Gambia Secretariat Archives, Official Diary of the Manager of British Combo - Sergeant G.J.Thomas;
   C.O. 87/162, 1901, vol.1. 25th March, Governor G.Denton to Joseph Chamberlain.
3. An Agricultural Board composed of Officials and Merchants was set up by Governor Llewelyn to supervise Kotu.
4. C.O. 87/71, 1861, Legislative Council Minutes for 1st July 1860.

and therefore had a right "to be attended to as well as Bathurst."[1] It was in 1860 that d'Arcy was allowed to tax British Combo;[2] and experience at first showed that the farmers did not object to being taxed. d'Arcy reported "that it prevented Palavers about ground, and that it showed them we [the British Government] were not going to give up the territory to the king of Combo...."[3] With the appointment of a resident Manager of that area in 1861[4] it became practicable and desirable "to tax the remunerative groundnut farms ... in order that the territory might be self-supporting for the most part."[5] Population had increased since the Combo wars of the 'fifties, and a growing prosperity was not yet disturbed by the wars of the River, so that the tax of one dollar per acre was not really a great hardship. This did not mean that the collection of tax was less difficult in British Combo than among the poorer Africans of St. Mary's. On the contrary, not only were there disruptive elements who refused to pay tax for land which had belonged to their ancestors, (especially as the senoras were not taxed),[6] but generally, the land tax was an annoyance to many farmers. And when the price of nuts was unattractive in the settlement, large numbers of these farmers were

1. C.O. 87/67, 1859, vol.1. Leg. Co. Minutes for 14th June 1858.
2. C.O. 87/69, 1860, 30th May, Newcastle to d'Arcy.
3. C.O. 87/71, 1861, 24th July, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
4. Ibid.
5. (C.O. 87/71, 1861, 5th Dec. 1860, d'Arcy to Colonial Surveyor, Lt.-Garsia;
   (C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. 23rd June, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
6. C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. 23rd June, d'Arcy to Cardwell.

reported to migrate into French territory where the price of nuts was higher, and there was no comparable tax on Farms.[1] Governors therefore found they had to continue to remind the inhabitants of British territory of "the advantages of roads and bridges, and ... resident Constables"[2] stationed in their villages.

Thus a dreary story with few highlights was the economic picture of the Gambia in our period; sometimes it almost looked sinister, but always it was relevant and disturbing. Economic problems invaded all other areas of activity in the settlement, and were the basis for many political decisions. That no satisfactory solution could ever be found to these perennial problems, drove Governor Kennedy to extreme pessimism - he predicted that under the circumstances, "the resources of the Gambia will yearly become less and less."[3] In preference to such a decline, he was determined to conduct the colony into French hands; for they were more likely to produce the funds required for development of a settlement on the borders of Senegal than were the British.[4] It was a realistic attitude to an insoluble problem, notwithstanding Kennedy's own prejudices against the Gambia and his desire to safeguard Sierra Leone interests.

1. "Civic" on "British Combo" in Bathurst Observer, 29th April 1884.
2. C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. 23rd June, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
3. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. Kennedy's Comment to Earl Granville on Major Bravo's despatch, 15th January 1870.
4. See Chapter VII of Thesis.

Dependence on Sierra Leone between 1866 and 1888, and the real threat of French rule between 1866 and 1876, produced a programme of political development from the merchants of Bathurst. They had for long believed that "extravagance and bad management are the sole causes of our monetary troubles." Many of them were convinced that the revenue "in the hands of a competent Administrator ... is amply sufficient to meet all our wants and gradually extinguish our liabilities."[1] As merchants, they affirmed that their interest in the Gambia was trade; it was hardly to their advantage, therefore, to maintain a Government with "a large official staff at a cost of over £10,000 p.a. ... [for] so long as retrenchment is left to Governors and high officials on the Coast, so long will salaries, emoluments, and offices be increased under one plea or another, as our Colonial expenditure has been more than doubled within the last twelve years."[2] Thus the issue of Transfer became a turning-point, not only in their attitudes to Governors and Colonial Office officials, but in their expectations for the future. Those who were prepared to continue business in the River under the cloud of uncertainty stumbled on the idea of a type of Consular Government.

The practicability of local self-government was for the first time a matter of very great appeal and worthy of serious consideration. No longer was it enough to demand separation from another government, but it was now desirable to replace the system of Crown Colony Government by a less elaborate machinery to be operated by a Chief Justice; for men with legal education

1. C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. 23rd March, T.F.Quin to Cardwell.
2. Merchants' Memorial to Earl Granville, 13th August 1869, published in African Times, Sept. 1869.

"respect the constitutional rights and liberties of the Colonists."[1] They demanded to be allowed to manage their own local affairs by which they could make such reductions in the Civil Establishment as would effectively decrease the annual expenditure; "we do not see that we are more unfitted for it than our countrymen in the Rivers Bonny and Benin where they have a larger trade..."[2] Under Thomas Brown's leadership, they agitated for internal autonomy in press and petition, in preference to French rule.

Consular Government had operated successfully in the Bights of Benin and Biafra since 1849; and from the point of view of British merchants engaged in the trade of the Niger Delta it proved a most effective means of protecting their interests in native states. Under John Beecroft, the first Consul, influence was exerted with local potentates for furthering British political and economic interests. As a former merchant in the area, Beecroft "had unrivalled experience of local affairs" which was to be of great service to him in his capacity as official representative of Great Britain. And while Lord Palmerston remained Foreign Secretary with his "intelligent grasp of the meaning of events in the bights of Benin and Biafra", Beecroft could rely on support for his energetic measures and even interference in the affairs of African states. His significant contribution to the growth of British power in Nigeria during his consulship 1849-54 has already been told by Dr. Dike.[3]

1. Merchants' Memorial to Earl Granville, 13th August 1869, published in African Times, Sept. 1869.
2. Ibid.
3. Dike, "Trade and Politics", p.93.

The attraction of this kind of Government to the merchants of the Gambia in the 'sixties was its very simplicity which required no taxation for its maintenance, and its effectiveness among African states. They had long petitioned for protection of trade in the River Gambia by interference in native politics by methods which Beecroft had showed could be employed with success. But on the whole, Colonial Secretaries did not share Palmerston's thinking, and, until the late nineteenth century, were opposed to increasing British commitments on the West Coast. In any case, the Gambia hardly provided the ideal conditions for a Consul. Even in the eighteenth century, the expensive machinery of Crown colony government had been found more appropriate to it than rule by a Committee of merchants, because of acute French rivalry in the region. By the mid-nineteenth century the French had made Dakar their headquarters in West Africa, from which point they pursued an expansionist policy into the interior. With French rivalry on one hand and native wars on the other, a Consul could not have achieved the results of Beecroft. His influence in the River Gambia would certainly have been far less extensive.

Merchants of St. Mary's were nearer the white planters or colonists of the West Indian colonies than British traders in the Niger Delta. They had emigrated from Goree to St. Mary's with their households and dependents, with commercial ambitions, and with a desire to build permanent homes as well as factories. That was partly why they agitated for a civil government under a Governor,[1] and later for a representative Council by which the growing needs

1. See Chapter II of Thesis.

of the newly founded town of Bathurst could be met. With the loss of two-thirds of their representation on the Legislative Council in 1866, and the return to a dependent status, the mercantile body looked to the experiment in the Delta as a possible solution to their discontent.

In the matter of defence, for example, they planned to subsidize native chiefs who would protect trade in the River, "and with one Company of soldiers, or the frequent visit in the healthy season of one of H.M.'s gunboats, we could protect ourselves here."[1] The dread of a warship by African chiefs had given Beecroft the whip-handle in the Delta states, and he had made it a practice of visiting them in such a vessel, and of holding palavers with them on the spacious deck.[2] With the regular visit of a man-of-war in the River Gambia merchants there, and indeed Governors too, believed that depredations by riverain tribes would cease. But the imperial Government could never be moved to activity for the defence of the settlement unless it felt the lives of British subjects threatened. And it did nothing now, even with the troops[3] withdrawn and the settlement stripped "of all arms and ammunition," the defence was left to a modest militia force and a small ill-disciplined Police Force.[4] To this was added a Police boat which would give some protection to traders in the River. Meanwhile frustration mounted, and so did demands for internal autonomy.

1. Merchants' Memorial to Earl Granville, 13th August, pub. Af.Times, Sept. 1869.
2. Dike, "Trade & Politics", p.129.
3. The Troops stationed in the Gambia had been maintained at a cost of £20,000 p.a. by the Imperial Treasury.
4. C.O. 87/99, 1871, vol.1. 14th April, Merchants to Acting Administrator Colonel Anton.

Attack was concentrated on the Civil Establishment, which Colonel Ord had not found excessive in scale even though it absorbed a large proportion of the revenue. Civil servants in the Gambia did not enjoy extravagant salaries but "the year's revenue is rarely able to meet" all the demands of the Civil Establishment. By 1864 the Colony had incurred liabilities to the amount of £5,630.11.0., the revenue being then £17,204.15.10. inclusive of a Parliamentary Grant of about £4,000.[1] Between 1860 and '70 revenue climbed from £14,153.14.0. to £22,088.7.0. (the latter being the figure for 1868), while expenditure kept a close position behind, reaching £21,937.0.4. in 1870.[2] Any table of accounts demonstrated forcibly that no margin was available for contingencies like an epidemic or indeed for public works. Ord's recommendation was for a regulation of expenditure according to the ability to raise revenue. Indeed officials and merchants seemed to have been agreed on this objective, but they differed as to the means of its achievement. Whenever revenue was slightly productive, merchants agitated for relief from taxation (which was mainly absorbed in salaries and pensions), and the Secretary of State raised the issue of a reduction in the amount of the Parliamentary Grant. For the British Government was now committed to a policy of retrenchment in the West African Settlements. Merchants, too, accepted that it was an unnecessary waste of imperial and colonial funds to spend "Forty-thousand a year for the support of a Colony of five English and

1. C.O. 87/82, 1865, 21st April, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
2. C.O. 87/84, 1866, vol.1. 23rd March, T.F.Quin to Cardwell.

four French merchants and some four thousand native inhabitants ...."[1]

Consular Government would certainly have reduced 'overheads', and largely removed the problem of salaries and pensions for civil servants; and Thomas Brown was perhaps as qualified as Beecroft to operate Consular government in West Africa. There was no denying his abilities, his grasp of the needs of the settlement or of his almost hypnotic influence over a considerable cross-section of the inhabitants of St. Mary's. Perhaps the experiment might have been worth attempting, though the complete absence of such an alternative solution in the Ord Report would suggest that conditions in the Gambia, as in Sierra Leone, were not comparable to those of the Bights. Beyond this, if Ord could envisage self-governing communities in West Africa under African leadership, then Consular Government could hardly have provided the training ground required for political development of that kind. It was no more than a primitive and skeleton machinery - an expedient device to meet peculiar conditions.

Government by Governor and Council, on the other hand, was an old institution in the Sene-Gambia region, and had almost produced a kind of mentality and maturity in its mercantile communities not yet found in the Delta. That Thomas Brown had thought it necessary to remind Admiral Patey "that a mercantile community is not to be governed in the same arbitrary manner as the crew of one of H.M.'s Frigates", was indication of attitudes in a 'provincial' town like Bathurst.[2] Put in a different way, one "Nobody"

1. Merchants' Memorial to Earl Granville, 13th August, African Times, Sept. 1869; The Memorialists argued that an annual revenue of over £20,000 ("supplemented by a Parliamentary Grant of £1,500 p.a.") was collected from their small community of five English and four French mercantile establishments, with seven or eight European and African entrepreneurs.
2. C.O. 87/88, 1867, vol.2. 4th June, Brown to Patey.

writing on Brown's favourite subject "Taxation and Representation" in 1868, demanded for tax-paying citizens the right to the disposal of the proceeds of taxation "as we think proper ... subject to constitutional restrictions."[1] The people, he complained had no voice in the Government, being unfairly represented in Council, in consequence of which "our revenues are frittered away, and our Government administered by incompetent and incapable men."[2] Another writer to the same paper - the African Times - illustrated the effects of this want of adequate representation in terms of everyday living: "If we had any voice in the spending of public money raised here," he wrote scornfully, "we should have got a fire-engine and fire buckets for the public long ago...."[3]

Obviously, such demands could have been answered by a Mayor and Corporation elected from the mercantile body, a proposal that the merchants themselves did submit.[4] Brown would have been a popular candidate among Europeans and Mulattoes for the office of Mayor, being the oldest resident among the Europeans in the colony, and "interested in most of the affairs of the inhabitants ...."[5] It was during the Cholera Epidemic of 1869 that the want of some kind of municipality was most felt. For the Administrator and a small official staff could not by themselves cope with a whole town of sick and dying inhabitants, even had the Colonial Surgeon been cooperative.[6] It

1. "Nobody", in African Times, February 1868.
2. Ibid.
3. "Eye-witness", in African Times, Feb. 1868.
4. Memorial to Granville, Af. Times, Sept. 1869.
5. C.O. 87/92, 1869, vol.2. 5th July, Patey to Kennedy.
6. C.O. 87/92, 1869, vol.2. 22nd & 25th June, Patey to Kennedy.

was tragic that no machinery existed in the town for such emergencies, and nothing could be done "except by moving the Administrator." 11,000 persons died within a month, and a general paralysis afflicted those who were left behind, but there being "no municipality, no authority, and no money at our disposal, we are powerless and cannot assist our fellow creatures nor alleviate their troubles ...."[1] In short, the epidemic brought out the deficiencies of the system of Government in the Gambia in the late sixties, and increased tensions there, compelling merchants to demand "something like constitutional liberty." They would no longer tolerate a policy by which they contributed "thousands a year to the Colonial Chest with not even a voice in the appointment of a policeman."[2]

In contrast to the easy control exercised by the Foreign Office over a Consul like Beecroft, Governor and Council were bound to Colonial Office by stringent regulations which often proved far too restricting for small-scale societies such as was found in the Gambia. Among other powers, the Secretary of State could lay down instructions to be observed in the annual Estimates of the colony, and it was incumbent on all officials in Council to "do their duty and not shirk responsibility."[3] In other words, the British Government held

1. "T", in African Times, June 1869.
2. "Gambia", in Af. Times, June 1869.
3. C.O. 87/89, 1868, vol.1. 14th November, Colonial Office Minute, B.C.

ultimate control, and exercised the right to retire officers on pensions calculated by the Treasury, but paid out of colonial funds without the approval of unofficials in the Legislative Council.[1] Thomas Brown's remonstrances against imperial patronage even at a time when the Parliamentary Grant was being reduced went unheeded. For an unofficial mercantile member in an insolvent colony did not qualify to express views on the spending of public funds, whereas Colonial Office might pay deference to "the two or three principal planters or merchants in Ceylon or Trinidad." Though retrenchment was the policy of the Government it was not expected to disturb the Civil List.

It was no mean feat that under the governorship of Dr. V.S. Gouldsbury - 1877 to 1884 - the settlement began to accumulate "a considerable surplus" from the revenue, and, after paying off its debt to the Imperial Exchequer, it assumed charge for the Mail subsidy formerly paid by the Home Government.[2] Gouldsbury had followed instructions to the letter, for arriving at the colony when its financial condition was serious, he was strictly warned to economize. It was in 1883 that "the best revenue ever known was collected" in the colony, amounting to £28,952.0.10. while expenditure was only £23,865.14.3., thus providing a surplus of over £5000.[3] But this boom did not last; and the Administrator simply avoided financial crises by undertaking a minimum of

1. C.O. 87/89, 1868, vol.1. 14th March, Kennedy to Newcastle, enclosure, 6th March Legislative Council Minutes;
   C.O. 87/97, 1870, vol.2. Leg. Co. Minutes 12th November.
2. C.O. 87/118, 1882, vol.1. 27th March, C.O. Minute, A.W.L.H. to Meade.
3. C.O. 87/125, 1885, vol.2. 3rd August, C.O. Minute, A.W.L.H. to R.Meade.

public works, and employing cheap labour whenever practicable. Thus, deprived of jobs as skilled mechanics and artisans, the Bathurst Native Association deplored a policy which sacrificed efficiency to economy (meaning particularly the employment of convict labour in public works of all kinds).[1] Not only the African community, but merchants in the settlement agitated for sanitary improvements. But Gouldsbury had his instructions, and he would not incur debts.

After Gouldsbury's departure, the revenue followed a sharp decline till in 1887 it only yielded £12,497 while expenditure remained at over £20,000.[2] This was due to the falling off in customs revenue consequent upon the failure of the groundnut crop. Once again voices rose in support of retrenchment and a simplification of the machinery of Government - "Thirty-five officers to a little black village —— is rather too much," was S. Whitfield's comment to Meade.[3] Yet Gouldsbury's economies had displeased; even his employment of an African as Commandant of MacCarthy Island, partly with a view to making some saving, had been condemned by a writer "O" in the African Times. Prestige and influence among the riverain tribes were thus lost to economy, "O" had complained.[4] There seemed to be no answer to the crippling economic problems of the settlement. Indeed the colony was again forced to raise additional funds by imposing higher duties on certain articles like kola, inspite of strong opposition from African entrepreneurs. That was how kolas brought the

1. Bathurst Native Association - 1879 - Memorial to Sir Samuel Rowe, pub. African Times, March 1883.
2. C.O. 87/134, 1888, vol.3. 19th Dec., G.T.Carter to Lord Knutsford; C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 25th May, S.W. to R.Meade.
3. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 25th May, C.O. Minute, S.W. to Meade.
4. "O" on the "River Gambia", African Times, Oct. 1880.

highest revenue in 1889 - £1,829.9.10 compared with £1,359.2.6. collected from the Groundnut export duty.[1] It was evident that there was "little or no chance of the Colony being able to do more than just pay its way ...."[2]

While separation from Sierra Leone relieved the colony of certain salaries which had strained its resources,and increased unofficial representation in the Council enabled the people to bring pressure to bear upon the local Government, political advantages by themselves provided no instant solutions to the problems of an unstable economy. Until the revenue expanded considerably, there was little to choose between the complete neglect of a programme for public works and spasmodic attempts at providing indifferent works by unqualified officers. This was a recurrent problem in the Colonial Engineer's Department; numerous letters to the African Times deplored wasteful expenditure incurred in that department. A classic example was the construction of the Oyster Creek Bridge which was to join St. Mary's Island to Combo, which was under construction from 1879 to 1885, because of the inefficiency of Mr. Bauer, the Colonial Engineer.[3] Indeed, the bridge was only finally completed by a qualified civil engineer.[4]

An efficient government presupposed a healthy economy, for Colonial policy in the mid-nineteenth century was not based on philanthropy but on the hard facts of economics. British merchants in the Gambia knew this; they joined issue with their rulers because of a lack of understanding of their real needs,

1. C.O. 87/137, 1890, vol.1. 11th March, R.B.Llewelyn to Lord Knutsford.
2. C.O. 87/105, 1873, vol.2. 4th Sept., A.W.L.H. to R.Herbert.
3. C.O. 87/117, 1881, 21st July, Merchants to Lord Kimberley.
4. C.O. 87/124, 1885, 23rd May, C.A.Moloney to Sir Samuel Rowe.

and for a refusal to plan efficiently for the colony. Rather, that Colonial Office officials waited hopefully for a renewal of negotiations for an exchange of the Gambia with the French.[1]

1. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 28th May, C.O. Minute, O.F. to W.I.Holland.

CHAPTER VII

AFRICAN OPINION AND THE PROPOSED 'CESSION' TO FRANCE - 1866-76.

Britain's desire to cede or transfer the Gambia was based on fiscal grounds. As has been seen, the colony's revenue fluctuated to such an extent that long-term development programmes were not possible without the colony falling into debt. The drainage of the Island of St. Mary's for the improvement of public health, the maintenance of imperial troops and a colonial steamer for the defence of the settlement, the payment of a mail subsidy to facilitate external communications - all these required substantial capital which the colony could not always afford either in the 'sixties or the 'seventies. And as the Treasury was never generous towards the colony, the result was a "defective" government, which James Stephens had described as "the essential condition of all such Societies ...."[1]

The smallness of the territory was generally equated with insignificance and unimportance in the Colonial Office; so that when 'Cession' became a political issue and a subject of debate in Parliament in the late 'sixties, W. Monsell, the Under-Secretary of State, supported by Charles Adderley, stated categorically that the Gambia could not be regarded as a colony, nor could it be compared with those colonies established by the British nation and destined to develop into nations. To many officials it was "merely a

1. C.O. 87/28, 1842, vol.2. 20th June, James Stephen to Mr. Hope.

station for carrying out a policy" (an anti-Slave Trade policy), with only a handful of colonists - "39 males and 8 females", and being of no importance to the trade of Britain.[1] In fact, it served no useful purpose to the Mother Country whatever, neither increasing her political influence or military power, nor promoting her trade. And from the state of her tribal communities, she had become "a constant source of danger and anxiety," so that it was expedient that she should be disposed of.[2]

The issues which such a cataclysmic solution raised provoked public discussion both inside the Gambia and in Britain. An outburst of indignation accompanied the rumour spread abroad of the 'plot' to deprive British citizens of their nationality without their consent; for negotiation between the French and British Governments had passed the introductory stage, with no official statement on the Proposal having been made in the colony. It was this tactical blunder on the part of the Foreign and Colonial Offices which made 'Cession' a sinister proposition for Africans and their supporters. Without official support, African and British merchants took the initiative into their own hands, organising pressure groups wherever they found opportunity to oppose Transfer.

For the French Government already suffered from a reputation for discriminatory practices against British merchants in commercial enterprise,[3] and for a harsh military policy against African chiefs, so frequently demonstrated in the Sene-Gambia region. Indeed the colony had for many

1. "Questions in Parliament - 15th July 1870", pub. African Times, July 1870.
2. C.O. 87/108, 1875, 14th October 1875, A.W.Hemming to R.Meade.
3. See Chapters II & III of Thesis.

decades lived under a French threat of invasion and possible defeat in the event of a European war between Britain and France, one reason why the problem of the defence of the settlement was of such major importance to the colonists. But even with the withdrawal of the troops in 1866 and 1870, the alternative of a peace-time Transfer to a Foreign Power had never seriously presented itself to them as a solution to the Gambia problem.

Professor J.D. Hargreaves has made an interesting and detailed study of 'Cession', particularly of its diplomatic aspect, and of the Parliamentary debates which were the outcome of negotiation.[1] There remains to be told in greater detail the effects of the Proposal on Africans in the Gambia, not only urbanised persons who had for nearly half a century been nurtured as British subjects, but also indigenous tribes who had lived on the banks of the River for generations, and whose chiefs had ceded land to the British in the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the British still paid them annual stipends in recognition of their status as the owners of the land; but it was not thought necessary to consult them about the proposed transfer of their states to the French Government.

It was therefore appropriate, even if the initiative might have come from Thomas Brown (as was implied by officials), that Tomaney Bojang, the

1. J.D. Hargreaves, " A Prelude to Partition in West Africa", (London, Macmillan & Co. 1963), Chapter IV - "Towards a Territorial exchange 1869-76".

king of Combo, whose father had sold Banjul (St. Mary's Island) to Captain Grant in 1816 should now ask for his lands to be returned to him as an act of friendship, rather than that he should be "transferred to another person." It was war, he explained, that had compelled him to give up part of his territory (that is, Combo), to the British, but his father had given Banjul in friendship.[1] Attitudes of urbanised Liberated Africans contrasted markedly both with those of the chiefs, and of British merchants in the settlement whose primary concern was with the possible loss of property and profits that might be the outcome of transfer. While such men came to be absorbed with compensation claims, their African traders, equally desirous to protect their modest houses and small businesses, and the nucleus of Africans in the civil service and the church, were moved much more by sentiment than by economic reasoning. Their immediate reaction was to submit a petition of dismay couched in terms of deep loyalty and patriotism.

This was not surprising for immigrants with their history of lost homes and temporary slavery, and of rehabilitation in strange ports. Harry Finden, John Bocock, John Campbell, leaders in the community, had all been rescued from slave ships as adults. By dint of self-help and the benevolence of governments and merchants, and the devoted service of missionaries, many of their kind had risen in life and a few were beginning to aspire to a degree of economic independence.[2] One Thomas King had property valued by the local barrister, Chase Walcott, at £2,500, and capital at £4,000. Harry Finden's

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 2nd June, A.E.Kennedy to Earl Granville - enclosure - Translation of letter by Tomaney Bojang, 23rd May 1870.
2. See Chapter III of Thesis.

property was valued at £350 and his capital at £500, while Joseph Richards owned land and house to the value of £500, and capital of £800. Such were the hazards of trade in the Gambia, however, that like British merchants, the debts owed by many of the Liberated Africans "overbalance all what they are worth, and should demand be made for payment, it would leave them nothing but poverty."[1]

For this reason, Governor Kennedy, a protagonist in the drama, discounted protest from this element, on the pretext that they were grog shopkeepers or persons from a low grade in society, "and wholly without stake or property in the Settlement."[2] Notwithstanding such a derogation, some of these men were planning higher education for their sons at the C.M.S. Grammar school in Sierra Leone. And if Transfer was not immediately seen as a threat to their livelihood, it filled them with apprehension for their way of life - their habits, customs, language and religion. Such losses could not be measured in stocks and shares as if they were commercial houses. For Africans, then, the issues involved were as much psychological and emotional as economic or political.

Peace and retrenchment, however, were the guiding principles of mid-Victorian colonial policy, in consequence of which a hostile attitude was adopted towards colonies that involved Britain in expense without increasing her trade or political power, or exposed her to the risk of participation in tribal wars. Colonel Ord's report of 1865 had been a deciding factor in the

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 10th May, Report of T.G.Lawson to A.E.Kennedy.
2. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 30th April, Kennedy to Major Bravo.

new colonial policy for West Africe, which had as its objective eventual withdrawal from that region.[1] The Gambia was the most vulnerable of the West African settlements, but though the British Government would have preferred to cede rather than exchange it for posts that might only increase financial responsibilities, the Colonial Office thought it necessary for the appeasement of public opinion to exclude a pure cession to the French.[2]

The French posts under consideration were Grand Bassam, Dabon and Assinee on the Ivory Coast, each of them rejected by Kennedy as an "encumbrance".[3] And even when hopes were raised by the substitution of the Gabon in Equatorial Africa (with its harbour facilities and trade in palm oil) for the three "inferior posts",[4] calculating minds reckoned that heavy expense would still be involved if this neglected French colony were to be governed satisfactorily. A letter from a British merchant in Gabon confirmed this view, and anticipated an improved state of affairs under British rule. It complained that the "laissez faire style of rules adopted by the French completely ruined a very flourishing River", having allowed the tribes in that area to set them at defiance with impunity. In conclusion, the writer looked for "more efficacious protection for property and person" under the British, even at a cost of increased taxation.[5] Such an adverse report of French administration

1. C.O. 267/86, 1865. Ord Report.
2. C.O. 87/86, 1866, vol.3. 21st August, T.F.Elliott to Lord Clarendon.
3. C.O. 87/93, 1869, vol.3. 23rd Sept., A.E.Kennedy to Earl Granville.
4. C.O. 87/86, 1866, vol.3. 21st August, T.F.Elliott to Lord Clarendon.
5. Letter from Gabon to the African Times, pub. 18th Feb. 1870.

in the Leeward Coast of West Africa was not typical of French policy in the Windward Coast, and would indicate that they were not showing the same enthusiasm for their posts at a great distance from Senegal.

In contrast, British interests in the Niger basin were growing with the annexation of Lagos in 1861; and the activities of Captain John Glover, its Administrator, represented to British merchants in Gabon what the British Government could also do for them.[1] Indeed, it was upon the assumption of a shift of trading interests on the Coast that the French proposal for exchange was made in 1866. Thus the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne, French Ambassador to the Court of St. James, represented to the British Foreign Secretary "that whilst French trade on the West Coast of Africa has of late years increased especially on that portion of the Coast comprised between the mouths of the Senegal and Gambia Rivers, British trade on the other hand, has been increasing to the south of Sierra Leone; and that for the above reason, it would be for the mutual advantage of the two countries to make an exchange of territory and factories, by which France should acquire additional advantages for trading purposes to the North, and Great Britain to the South of Sierra Leone, which it is suggested, might form the point of demarcation between the territorial interests of the two countries."[2] It was an attractive proposition, not only to the British Government, which had accepted Ord's Report in which the trade of the Gambia was stated to be "chiefly French and

1. Dike, "Trade and Politics", p.195; Letter from Gabon, Af.Times, Feb.1870.
2. C.O. 87/86, 1866, vol.3. 2nd March, The Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne to the Earl of Clarendon.

in French hands"[1], but it was warmly approved by successive Governors of Sierra Leone who saw in the proposal advantageous concessions for their own mercantile community.

Beyond the limitations of British trade with the Gambia, was the very real danger of involvement in tribal wars on the banks of that River from the 'sixties. Ord had pointed to this factor in the decline of trade; and the Select Committee of 1865 had concluded that capital was not likely to be attracted to a neighbourhood that was constantly disturbed.[2] It was therefore with much confidence that Charles Adderley, during the debate on Cession affirmed that no place on the Coast was more likely to become the scene of tribal warfare than the Gambia; and if Britain could avoid such wars and strengthen her position in the Leeward Coast, leaving the French "who seemed to be in love with tribal wars" to fight the battles, he did not think anyone would regret the loss of the Gambia.[3]

The Gambia settlement was not destined to be used as a pawn in the game of diplomacy, and strong opposition was soon organised against the threatened return of the pernicious system of transferring whole peoples from one power to another without their consent.[4] It was F. Fitzgerald of the African Times who was among the first to challenge anti-Gambia sentiments exhibited in the British Parliament, pointing out that Monsell had "so completely ignored ... the existence of any other British subjects at the Gambia than a portion of the few Europeans ... to whom he alluded as if these were the only

1. 1865 Ord Report.
2. Ord Report: Questions of Select Committee - Chairman to Ord.
3. Sir Charles Adderley in Debate on Cession in the House of Commons, 1st July 1870, reported in African Times, July 1870.
4. Ibid. - Lord Sandon.

human beings whose destinies were to be affected or involved in the projected Cession."[1] In contrast to official opinion, the African Times had long regarded all the West African colonies as future kingdoms which deserved better treatment from the British Government, and protection from the "selfish policy" pursued by France. To Fitzgerald, it was a proposal far from attractive or ethical that Britain, "having been the means of raising up an educated native class attached to English Rule", should now abandon that same people to a foreign power because of imperial economy. Besides, he reminded the Government that the Gambia had not been built up simply by its efforts, for the Church, too, Wesleyan missionaries in particular, had played its part.[2]

In July 1870, Lord Sandon put a direct question to the Government - whether or not the people of the Gambia had been or would be consulted on the subject of their transfer to France. The situation was summed up by Mr. Heygate who described British colonial policy as guided purely by self-interest to the extent that the strong and powerful had a better chance of being better cared for than small and insignificant dependencies which were not likely to be remunerative to Britain.[3] To these poignant words, Mr. Monsell gave very summary answers, dismissing the idea of any likely discontent in the Gambia settlement. Governor Kennedy, he assured the House, had ascertained the feelings of the inhabitants on the matter, and his opinion was that they would not offer any serious opposition to transfer.[4]

1. F.Fitzgerald, African Times, June 1870.
2. Editorial, Af. Times, Sept. 1869.
3. Mr. Heygate - Debate in House of Commons, 15th July 1870, pub. Af. Times, July 1870.
4. W.Monsell, House of Commons, 15th July 1870, pub. Af. Times, July 1870.

Since Kennedy's main interest was to secure favourable terms for Sierra Leone out of the Anglo-French negotiations, it was politic for him to underestimate the strength of opposition within the Gambia itself. Although he was right to point to the cosmopolitan nature of the African population in St. Mary's, which now numbered between 4000 and 5000 persons, he was very much mistaken to suppose there would be "no strong, united and national feeling" over a threat like transfer. "I do not believe," he wrote in March 1870 to the Secretary of State, "that any serious reluctance or opposition would be offered by them on learning the equitable and safe terms which would of course be agreed upon as regards their rights and property."[1] Within a month of writing this, he received the first petition against transfer from the Liberated African community, and others were to follow. Officials had not learnt a lesson from the discontent which had accompanied the exchange of territories on the Gold Coast between the British and the Dutch; they still saw no good reason for consulting local African opinion on matters affecting their interests. Indeed, Frederick Rogers reckoned in a minute that the consent of the families affected in the Gambia "might be procured by no very great expenditure of dash."[2] If officials envisaged any form of opposition, it was from the British merchants that they expected it.

Certainly, once British merchants in the Gambia became aware that negotiations were afoot between the two Governments, they began to organise their defences. It was Thomas Quin who first made enquiry about the

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 29th March, A.E.Kennedy to Earl Granville.
2. J.D.Hargreaves, "A Prelude to Partition in West Africa", (London, Macmillan & Co. 1963), Chapter IV - "Towards a Territorial exchange 1869-76."

negotiations from his London office in January 1870, to which he received a reply that "his Lordship is not able at present to give any definite answer to your question, but that in no case could such an arrangement take place without the intervention of Parliament."[1] The story of the partnership of Quin and Brown in the struggle against transfer has already been told,[2] though this writer is not convinced by the interpretation of mercantile motives as presented by a highly prejudiced Governor, like Kennedy. In any event, Brown, Quin and Thomas Chown were regarded by all Africans opposed to cession as champions of their cause. Certainly African chiefs made them their agents, intermediaries between themselves and the Governor, and the Sovereign too. Leaders of the Liberated African community consulted them before they submitted their petitions, for they were rightly recognised as men with some influence in London. The transfer question had for the moment bridged the gap created by racial antipathy in St. Mary's society of the 'sixties. Brown, who had been the most tyrannical of British merchants towards literate Africans in the 'sixties, had become their adviser in the 'seventies. This was significant, for it did indicate the determination of these men to stave off French rule in the Gambia. Their leaders were sufficiently shrewd to work for a united front in face of Colonial Office diplomacy, for only from such a position of strength, did they stand a chance of defeating the proposal.

1. Frederick Rogers to Thomas Quin, 3rd Feb. 1870, pub. Af.Times, Feb. 1870.
2. J.D.Hargreaves, "A Prelude to Partition in West Africa", (London, Macmillan & Co. 1963), Chapter IV - "Towards a Territorial exchange 1869-76."

In 1866 when the French proposal was first made through the Foreign Office, it was kept strictly confidential between that and the Colonial Office, except that the Governor of the West African settlements - Samuel Blackall - was invited to comment on the Ambassador's proposal. In detailing the disadvantages of the French posts offered for exchange, Blackall corrected the general error that the Gambia trade was almost exclusively French, pointing to the considerably less tonnage entering the River from France than Britain. The Governor, however, found no arguments against transfer, which might not be overcome by treaty; matters relating to fugitive slaves, landed property for Africans, and the rights of the Protestant church could, he believed, form subjects for negotiation. As to public opinion on transfer in the Gambia itself, Blackall expected to find a "considerable diversity of opinion amongst them (the merchants) as to the effect a transfer may have upon their interests ...."; for which reason he suggested that there should be compensations for those who did not wish to continue business under a French Government. From the unsatisfactory state of the River trade in 1866, in consequence of which merchants had made losses and complained of the want of protection, it was assumed that those who did not retire from the trade, "may prefer the French policy which no doubt would be to assume the Sovereignty of both banks of the River, and secure order by a strong military and naval force as on the Senegal River."[1] African reactions to the proposal were not generally considered, and, like his successors who were faced with the issue of transfer, Blackall never thought the proposal was preposterous or unethical.

1. C.O. 87/86, 1866, vol.3. 4th June, Governor Blackall to Edward Cardwell,

Preoccupation with internal problems and racial divisions isolated the inhabitants of St. Mary's from external events, so that the dialogue between the Colonial Office and the Governor of the West African settlements in 1866 completely by-passed the Gambia. When the discussion of terms was resumed between the British and French Governments in 1869, it was (the British press) that exposed the rumour circulating in London, for the benefit of the Gambia, Fitzgerald's object being to arouse public opinion against transfer both in Britain and in that settlement. It was unfortunately an unpropitious time for rallying a people recently ravaged by cholera, producing from the new Governor - Kennedy, the bland comment that though the rumour of cession had reached the colony, he had as yet received no protests from the people.[1] With a certain amount of external stimulus this was to come. But it was from the British mercantile community that the initiative came: as a group, the merchants had been far less distressed by the epidemic, and they were in closer contact with London than were African traders.

Once cession had become an issue within the settlement, Liberated Africans entrenched themselves in the vanguard of protest, organising meetings which were to produce petitions, albeit under the direction of Thomas Brown, as was believed.[2] While Africans might have been prompted to activity, they did not depend on Brown or any European merchant for motivity. For this reason their petitions differed from those of the merchants; and even where common ground was shared, each group recognised and emphasised its

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 23rd April, A.E.Kennedy to Earl Granville.
2. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 10th May, T.G.Lawson to A.E.Kennedy.

own peculiar interests. Liberated Africans had among them persons with legal training who were able to put their feelings and desires into words.

Official prejudice against petitioners on this issue tended to deflect attention from their petitions, which were invariably accompanied by derogatory remarks from Governors and Administrators. Major Bravo, during whose administration the first protest petitions were prepared, suggested that in weighing "the value of the Petitioners' opinion, ... it ought to be estimated in accordance with the ability to understand the real nature of the change ...." And indeed "the opinions of only a few are entitled to any consideration....", the majority of the population of Bathurst being of a migratory character.[1] These official agents of the British Government were disappointed that they could not educate Africans under them to appreciate the advantages of transfer. Opposition to the proposal was therefore interpreted by them as primarily inability to understand what it was all about, added to an inherent aversion to change of any kind in the nature of the African.[2]

The African Protest Petition to the Secretary of State of April 1870 carried over five hundred signatures of the African inhabitants of the settlement. That Kennedy dismissed their opinion as mere sentimentality gave cause for concern, but it did not deflect them from their objective. Hargreaves is inclined to support Kennedy's judgment, for he has written that

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 13th May, Major Bravo to Earl Granville.
2. Ibid.

the "very real dangers" which faced the African community then "were not particularly clearly described", except in the use of "general rhetorical arguments" against transfer. He would seem to mean by this the absence of economic arguments, such as the threat to their livelihood which largely "depended on their education in the English tongue, their acquaintance with British law or commercial practice ...." For the majority of those employed in the civil service and mercantile houses, "French Rule was liable to mean deterioration in personal status and loss of legal rights."[1]

Later petitions from the same group showed that Africans were not unaware of their interests, but for the moment they were more deeply moved by other considerations. Even when Kennedy received a deputation of Liberated Africans led by Harry Finden in Government House Bathurst to which he had resorted upon receiving the April petition, he still maintained that no weighty arguments were put forward. That the only questions of any importance asked were: "Would religion be respected and would there be a Consul or other British Resident." Nor did he discover "any sound or sufficient reason against the proposed transfer" on receiving a deputation of British merchants.[2]

In the final analysis, Governors, Administrators and Colonial Office officials had to realize that a question which involved the African's mode of life and institutions he was used to was as much a psychological problem with strong emotional overtones as a matter of politics and economics. Arguments, however weighty, could not convince men against their innate desire

1. J.D.Hargreaves, "A Prelude to Partition in West Africa", (London, Macmillan & Co. 1963), Chapter IV - "Towards a Territorial exchange 1869-76".
2. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 10th May, Kennedy to Granville.

to remain under a political power they were used to, even where that government was defective. In any case, it was always a risk to accept the unknown. Major Bravo was not far wrong that African conservatism was a factor in their opposition to transfer. It was equally true, too, that such consistent opposition to French rule was not a decision of the moment, but was based on some experience or on observed facts in the neighbouring territory of Goree and Senegal. "I fear the representations I have made of the advisability of the measure," bemoaned Bravo, "has met with little response, and any efforts made to convince them to approve of the transfer can only, I feel sure, result in failure."[1] Kennedy despised such an admission, and warned the Colonial Office that Bravo had the wrong attitude to transfer himself and was not the right Administrator to get it through.[2]

African opposition was more vigorous for coming from a wide cross-section of the African inhabitants of the settlement. Indeed, many illiterates allowed their names to be appended to any protest petition drawn up because it was believed that they were fully aware of the implications of French rule.[3] Nor must it be forgotten that Harry Finden himself was illiterate, and that as leader in his community he would have had a directing hand in the actual framing of any petition. Chase Walcott, the West Indian barrister, was reported to have "worded and written" it, being apprehensive that transfer "would be materially detrimental to his profession as a lawyer ...." Much

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 13th May, Bravo to Granville.
2. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 2nd June, Kennedy to Granville.
3. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 13th May, Bravo to Granville.

inside information about the petitioners had in fact been discovered for Governor Kennedy by his official interpreter, Thomas G. Lawson.[1] Walcott seems to have been commissioned to stress the general effect of transfer on a 'small' people; and in interpreting Liberated African feeling, he rightly made an appeal to the heart rather than the mind, expressing a pathetic situation in a sequence of thought and phrase that was African.

Beneath a facade of generalisations lay deep-rooted objections to French rule, suspicion of unfamiliar customs, manners and institutions, and, above all, of impending loss of language and laws long established. To urbanised Africans, particularly, the administration of justice was the key to good government and the happiness of the subject. They had made themselves watchdogs of the local courts in order to protect their rights against oppression from lay magistrates;[2] and the thought of living under a completely foreign legal system must have filled them with trepidation. The timely return of Joseph Reffell from London in late 1870 brought them relief, and further legal aid for opposing transfer. Inspite of outbursts of anti-government petitions[3] which had preceded the transfer issue, neither British merchants nor Liberated Africans welcomed French military rule as the answer to their grievances.

There was no enthusiasm displayed in the settlement for benefits to be derived from French administration. Liberated Africans argued that they had been rescued from slavery and located in the Gambia by the British, and that

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 10th May, T.G.Lawson to A.E.Kennedy.
2. See Chapter V of Thesis.
3. See Chapters V & VI of Thesis.

others among them were the descendants of African soldiers who had moved to St. Mary's when Goree was ceded to France. That the settlement had been built "by their arduous labours in cutting down trees and bushes...." More than locating them, the British had educated them and converted them to Christianity, so that many were now employed as "Ministers of the Gospel and schoolmasters, clerks, tradesmen, carpenters, joiners, shipwrights, etc."[1] In a post-script to their April petition they submitted an ultimatum to the Secretary of State, they declared that they "will not consent to live under French Government, and desire to know what is to become of their lands, houses and properties when they remove from the place ...."[2] Even so, it was as "deeply grieving" British subjects, rather than indignant traders or civil servants that such Africans saw themselves.

In short, they had no grievance against the British nor any objection to their administration. On the contrary, there was a feeling of sincere gratitude to British philanthropists by whose exertions many benefits had reached the African race. Fitzgerald, for example, never failed to expose their grievances to the British public, and not without results. That the British Parliament, too, had accepted in principle Colonel Ord's recommendation for the eventual establishment of self-government in the West African settlements made the future seem promising, and transfer unnecessary. Already their counterpart in Sierra Leone were beginning to work for that self-government.

1. Petition to Earl Granville, 31st May 1870, pub. African Times, July 1870.
2. Ibid.

Indeed, the role of Sierra Leoneans in the protest drama demands attention. While evidence here is sparse, it is known that the mid-nineteenth century saw a steady inflow to St. Mary's of "competent youths who have received tolerable education at Sierra Leone."[1] Local officials regarded them with suspicion for their radicalism which was penetrating the Liberated African community in Bathurst. They formed a dynamic element in this community, exerting some influence by virtue of their ability to read and write English. From the point of view of self-interest alone, it was reasonable that these youngmen to whom the civil service and other clerical employment was open, would oppose transfer. At least, an interesting comment on the petitioners of April 1870 appeared in Lawson's report to Kennedy. It related to a name appended to the petition and belonging to one Thomas F. Cuthbert "whose son, James Cuthbert, went to the Gambia about a month ago, and I am told," Lawson stated, "thought it a matter of course to place his Father's name, who at the time was in Sierra Leone, on it ...."[2]

As relevant to African protest was the support of the natives of the River Gambia and the adjoining French territories, including a handful of Mulattoes. There were one hundred and thirty-five signatures on the April Petition reported to belong to "Foreigners",[3] an apt reminder of the French presence within the settlement ever before transfer was conceived. French

1. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 21st July, d'Arcy to Cardwell.
2. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 10th May, Lawson to Kennedy.
3. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 13th May, Bravo to Granville.

influence had permeated the society through commerce, religion and social habits and customs. French merchants had pursued trade from Albreda long before the foundation of St. Mary's; and at the time of negotiation for transfer there must have been as many French as British merchants and mercantile clerks domiciled in Bathurst. Representatives of this community did not only identify themselves with Brown, Quin and Chown in opposing transfer, but had often taken the initiative in matters of common interest in St. Mary's. For instance, it was the then French Consul in Bathurst who had immediately reported to Governor d'Arcy the rumour of a December plot in 1865, a report that had been acted upon because it came from a responsible citizen.[1] In the colonial service too, French doctors had been employed as Assistant Colonial Surgeons.[2]

It was, however, the Mulatto community that had bridged the gap between British and French, being familiar with the habits, manners, customs and language of both nations. Their female folk, practised in French cuisine, had made admirably suitable mistresses for lonely British merchants engaged in the Sene-Gambian trade. By the influence of the Mulattoes, a considerable floating population oscillated between St. Mary's and Goree and St. Louis, some on social visits to relatives but others in search of seasonal employment.

1. C.O. 87/83, 1865, vol.2. 24th December, d'Arcy to Cardwell on interview with Monsieur Pechard.

2. C.O. 87/71, 1861, 12th Feb., d'Arcy to Newcastle.
In 1860 Dr. Arrault after six years' service as Assistant Colonial Surgeon in St. Mary's retired to France. In 1861, Dr. M.M. Chazaraint of St. Louis appointed.

It was inevitable that cultural, social and economic ties should have been maintained between the two peoples under such favourable conditions, where locally-built craft could make the voyage with little difficulty within a day. The French Roman Catholic church, too, was making a significant contribution to the spiritual and educational life of St. Mary's through the agency of two religious orders. The nuns of the Order of St. Joseph of Cluny had been indispensable as nurses during the Yellow Fever and Cholera epidemics, and were regarded with affection and trust by the growing number of destitute persons in the colony.[1] In short, only French political and military influence was absent, and no citizen of St. Mary's, including the French subjects themselves, showed any desire for the proposed change of government that was being advocated from outside.

Nor did the indigenous tribes in Combo and the River support transfer, for they had good reason to fear French power which so consistently organised punitive expeditions against recalcitrant tribes. Marabout warriors in these states knew that the British policy of non-intervention in native wars would never be tolerated under a French government. Further more, a Roman Catholic power was less likely to regard the jihad as a matter of tribal politics in which neutrality was desirable. With this in mind, Mahmoud n'Dare Bah, brother and successor of the great Ama Bah of Baddibu, submitted

1. C.O. 87/69, 24th May 1860, d'Arcy to Newcastle:- The Sisters of Mercy "were indeed visiting angels to the sick during the last [Yellow Fever] epidemic ..."
C.O. 87/100, 1871, vol.2. 23rd May, Henry Anton to A.E.Kennedy:- "The ladies of charity exercise a very beneficial influence in the community in taking care of and teaching female children, and are always ready to attend a sick bed ..."

a memorial to the Queen in 1871 deprecating "the sale" of the River Gambia to the French. Such an act, he protested, would be equal to "placing them under shot and shell," the aim of the French being "to spoil properties and destroy lives."[1] Native chiefs were sufficiently astute to weigh up the advantages of British rule against obvious disadvantages of French rule. Not that French native policy was unenlightened, for it was determination to improve the conditions of natives in their territories that provided a school for the sons of chiefs in the Senegal.[2] There was nothing comparable in the Gambia. Indeed when Wesleyan missionaries had attempted to build up such a school in MacCarthy Island, they met with little success because there was no compulsion imposed on parents by the local government, rather, Gambian chiefs wanted inducement before they would provide pupils for education![3] For all this, French methods of civilising the people of Africa were far too often ruthless, even for tribes accustomed to violence and bloody warfare.

1. C.O. 87/100, 1870, vol.2. 20th June, Mahmoud n'Dare Bah to H.M. the Queen.
2. André Villard, "Histoire du Senegal", p.127.
3. See Chapter IV of Thesis.

An important aspect of the struggle against transfer was the collaboration between merchants and Africans which was reminiscent of racial harmony in the early years of St. Mary's. It was the quest for local self-government that provided opportunities for cooperation; for it was widely known that Britain was contemplating transfer largely on fiscal grounds. Governor Kennedy himself had pointed out to Harry Finden's deputation of 1870 "the unreasonableness of Her Majesty's Government continuing a large military expenditure for the protection of a Settlement where the trade was so insignificant and the resident Europeans so few." He had warned them that the approaching withdrawal of the troops would only result in increased taxation for the provision of a large addition to the police; though even with such a force, he said, they would be "wholly defenceless against native aggression."[1] But Africans were not convinced that it was in their interest to accept alternative protection from France. If such were the arguments for transfer, then British merchants and African entrepreneurs were willing to pay extra taxes to increase revenue and thereby provide a larger militia and police force for the protection of the territory against aggressors.[2] Demands for self-government were therefore resumed as a practical alternative to transfer.

When Reffell returned to the colony in late 1870, he found opinion already formed among his people, this simplifying his role as intermediary between them and philanthropists in London. By October of the same year, he had

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 10th May, Kennedy to Granville.
2. Letter from African inhabitants to Kennedy, 6th May 1870, pub. African Times, June 1870.

organised another petition from one hundred and twenty of the principal African inhabitants for the Sovereign, the same being adapted for the Houses of Parliament. Apart from sentiments of loyalty and horror of impending French government, emphasis was given to the need for a local government. Thus the African community, too, had its contribution to make to the Scheme of Government previously submitted to the Colonial Office by Brown and Quin. While supporting the basis for reductions in the salaries of the civil staff, they scrutinized and revised the judicial proposals.[1]

Urbanised Africans, for example, would not accept that justice should be sacrificed to economy, which is how they saw a judiciary that was to be dependent, for the most part, on unpaid magistrates. To them this would perpetuate a pernicious system of which they had bitter experience. It is interesting that their substitution of a legal system based on qualified legal officers did receive the support of Brown, an indispensable oracle to the society on the transfer issue. It had been his tactical and deliberate move that shifted emphasis from mere protest to concrete proposals for the establishment of local self-government, the achievement of which would make transfer needless. "Allow the people to have a voice in the management of their affairs," they urged, "and things will be set right; more so when they are fully capable of self-government."[2] On their patron, Fitzgerald, they urged the necessity of bringing the Scheme before "some of the influential friends of the African", and "to press the adoption of the proposed scheme

1. Remarks of Liberated Africans on the proposed scheme, Dec. 15th 1870, pub. African Times, January 1871.

2. Ibid. "An African of Sierra Leone" on "Self-Government at Sierra Leone", pub. African Times, November 1865:- Africans of Sierra Leone explained exactly what they meant by self-government.

with [the] improvement in the Houses of Parliament, should the Colonial Office show slackness...."[1]

There was indeed little time for prevarication, for already a French man-of-war had arrived in the harbour on the 1st of May 1870 with Monsieur Joubert, Director of the Interior, whose purpose was to collect information on the spot for the Colonial Minister in Paris.[2] The report of the visit which had been sent to Fitzgerald stated that the exchange was planned for August, the programme of the French visitor having included inspection of "Government House, the Barracks and all the Government buildings, measuring the depth and shallow part of the River around Half-Die, the Cape and Fort Bullen etc."[3] Kennedy was as excited with a "long and satisfactory conference with Mr. Joubert who was undoubtedly much pleased with all he saw and heard,"[4] as the inhabitants were "crying bitterly" against the preliminaries to cession. Only a few weeks later, the Governor of Senegal himself, Monsieur V. Valière, arrived in the man-of-war "Bellone" accompanied by H.M.S. "Etoile", to obtain personal knowledge of the settlement and to make the views of his Government known to the inhabitants.

It was at this stage that mercantile forces fought particularly hard to save the settlement; it was a struggle they kept up to the end of 1871. The firm of Forster and Smith which claimed "experience ... older and larger

1. Letter by Joseph Reffell to F.Fitzgerald, 15th Dec. 1870, pub. Af.Times, January 1871.
2. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 25th April, Governor V.Valière of Senegal to Major Bravo.
3. Inhabitants of Bathurst, 13th May 1870, pub. African Times, June 1870.
4. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 10th May, A.E.Kennedy to Granville.
5. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 6th June, Bravo to Kennedy.

than that of any other House in the African trade, "made the basis of its opposition the disadvantages of French protectionist policy. These merchants claimed that in no instance had British merchants found it possible to carry on business of any importance in a French settlement, even though French merchants in Gambia were engaged in extensive trade. They further drew attention to commercial experience on the Gold Coast where the exchange of territories between British and Dutch "has been attended by ruin, in the literal sense of the word, to nearly all the merchants established there, and has been followed by the calamities of incessant wars and anarchy among the natives ever since ...."[1] To support these arguments, Quin and Brown had given examples from the trade of the Senegal, the Casamance, the Rio Nunez, and of the Rivers Saloum and Sine which contradicted any theory that British commerce could flourish under the French flag.[2]

That long-established merchants in the Gambia simply put up opposition to transfer in order to secure compensation from the French for their businesses is not altogether supported by the facts. Hargreaves admits that if Thomas Brown was the chief sponsor of African petitioners, it "rather weakens the hypothesis that [his] only real aim was to secure compensation."[3] Brown, for example, had built up his influence in the settlement over a long period, and he now played a role with prestige value, as adviser on tactics to be adopted in face of Anglo-French operations, which he was not anxious to

1. C.O. 87/98A, 1870, vol.3. 18th June, Forster and Smith to Granville.
2. Quin & Brown to Lord Kimberley, 21st July 1870, pub. Af.Times, Oct. 1870.
3. Hargreaves, "A Prelude to Partition", Chapter IV..

lose. Like Quin, he had close family ties with the Mulatto community, which may have involved him in the scandal of 1873,[1] but made life in the tropics pleasant generally. David Brown, his Mulatto son, was now an established merchant, and so was Thomas Quin's son, (the Quin daughters - Mulattoes - were among the belles of St. Mary's who dined at Government House).[2] And though Thomas Brown was not regarded as a prosperous merchant, even by Gambian standards, he was certainly a big property owner. From this picture of rather comfortable living, one wonders whether the leisurely pace of commerce in the Gambia might not have been more attractive for a merchant like Brown in his late sixties than the prospect of sudden retirement to London, albeit on some form of 'pension'?

It was certainly under mercantile influence that African chiefs rallied to oppose transfer, using Brown and Quin as representatives to act in their interest "both at Bathurst and in England in the matter now in question."[3] As C.H. Kortright, Administrator of the settlement, was to observe, and as the chiefs themselves knew well: "It would be the policy of the French to conciliate the River Natives [that is, the Soninkes] who are the principal growers of the groundnut, but no such incentive would rule their conduct in dealing with the Marabouts[4] of Lower Combo who now possess the whole of that country up to the British boundary. They cultivate but little, their trade is war, and a strong enmity exists between them and the French ...."[5] This

1. C.O. 87/104, 1873, vol.1. 21st June, D.A.Chalmers' Report;
   C.O. 87/105, 1873, vol.2. 28th Dec. C.O. Min., E.F.
2. C.O. 87/106, 1873, vol.3. 17th March, Thos. Quin, Jnr. to his Father.
3. C.O. 87/100, 1871, vol.2. 20th June, Mahmoud n'Dare Bah to H.M. the Queen.
4. See Chapter VIII of Thesis.
5. C.O. 87/107, 1874, 19th June, C.H.Kortright to Earl Carnavon.

comment was equally applicable to the situation in the River states.

Protest from these rulers did not carry much weight. For Mahmoud n'Dare Bah was very much a de facto potentate who yet had enemies to vanquish before he could establish authority within Baddibu and its environs; while Tomaney Bojang, de jure ruler of Combo had become a nominal king.[1] The latter appealed for treaties between himself and the British Government to be abrogated and his former lands returned to him rather than be handed over to "strangers".[2] This was hardly realistic when he knew that whatever part of his partitioned domain he now recovered would only fall to Marabout aggressors. Little wonder that a few months after this petition, in a private interview with the Manager of British Combo, Bojang disclosed that he would consider a powerful government in St. Mary's which was able to give him some protection against his enemies an advantage. Indeed, he was reported as having said that he was prepared to respect any ruling power that administered the government if that power was just and friendly. After all, the British had never yet assisted him with arms or men; and now that all troops had been withdrawn from the settlement, African chiefs believed this was indication that transfer was being effected.

The essential difference between British and French systems of administration had been partially explained by the Rev. W.B. Boyce, General Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in 1869. He thought that "the French are on the whole better Administrators ... for colonies like ours in

1. See Chapter VIII of Thesis.
2. C.O. 87/91, 1870, vol.1. 2nd June, Kennedy to Granville, enclosure - Letter from Tomaney Bojang to H.M. the Queen.

West Africa .... As an instrument of civilization and national progress," Boyce continued, "I do not undervalue Missionary labour or Education, but good rational Government in which the rulers bear not the sword in vain but are a terror to evil-doers, (Romans XIII) is equally an Ordinance of God ...." French military discipline among hostile tribes appealed to this missionary, but Africans preferred British rule which they described as "just and ample protection, care and liberty."[2]

It would, however, be wrong to infer from this that Liberated Africans believed that British native policy in the hinterland was satisfactory. As traders who were often exposed to the consequences of war in the River states, they had frequently urged the local government to adopt French methods with tiresome native chiefs who obstructed trade. Nevertheless, the prospect of a French government in the settlement itself filled them with misgiving, because they feared they too might fall victims to a rigorous policy. Under French administrative efficiency, it was unlikely that any Africans would be given special privileges, such as Liberated Africans enjoyed under British rule. After all, this community was a social phenomenon, in large measure, a creation of British policy in West Africa, and consequently of particular concern to a certain section of the British public.[3]

1. C.O. 87/98B, 1869, 17th Sept., Rev. W.B.Boyce to Dr. Rigg.
2. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 10th May, T.G.Lawson to A.E.Kennedy.
3. Ibid. Africans felt that to keep quiet about transfer, "might appear as if they were wanting in gratitude and loyal sentiment ... to the British Government who have done so much good to them."

The annexation of the Ashanti Protectorate in 1874 was the turning-point in British non-expansion policy of the mid nineteenth century. It gave the British for the first time some interest in taking over from France on the Ivory Coast in order to control the import of firearms into recently conquered Ashanti through Agni kinsmen.[1] Colonial policy was now to acquire territories which stood in the way of its new scheme for West Africa. According to a comment by A.W.Hemming at the time, the British Government was now committed to "a policy of real and earnest efforts to raise the natives of our Settlements from the slough of ignorance and barbarism in which they are sunk."[2] To finance roads and schools in the newly acquired territories in the Gold Coast, an expanding revenue based on customs duties was required; and to secure duties, smuggling was to be prevented by the control of a long extent of sea coast. For this worthy cause, Hemming declared that the interest of the few British merchants in the Gambia "are hardly to be weighed against the possibility of providing the means of carrying the blessings of civilization and imparting advantages of education to thousands of British subjects."[3] Thus officials argued the expediency of sacrificing one part of the Empire for the good of another.

Meanwhile in the Gambia, the situation had worsened with the resumption of tribal wars, to the extent that in 1874 and '75 the Government in Bathurst prepared against possible invasion of its borders by the Marabouts of

1. Hargreaves, "A Prelude to Partition", Chapter IV..
2. C.O. 87/108, 1875, 14th October, A.W.Hemming to R.Meade.
3. Ibid.

Combo.[1] Lord Carnavon, the Secretary of State was naturally disturbed by the prospect of the Government becoming involved in the wars, and therefore welcomed the opportunity to resume negotiation with the French for the transfer of that settlement. But if the British Government was interested in Monsieur Gavard's restatement of the French proposal, the British public showed no enthusiasm for it. In the Gambia, opposition was renewed by the Liberated African community, now under the leadership of Joseph Richards, an entrepreneur in groundnuts and kolas who was to become the first African member of the Legislative Council of the settlement. Among the one hundred and fifty-one petitioners of the Gambia Native Association were many of whose who had signed earlier protests, including Harry Finden.

Their reasons for opposing transfer had not changed in five years, though perhaps their language was more insistent, and they claimed to speak for the whole population. They could not accept transfer to an "obnoxious" government, because they loved political and religious liberty, and disliked a scheme "fraught with such evil consequences to —— [themselves] and their children." In detailing advantages offered by the Gambia, they made a new and relevant assertion, that via the River the "geographical or scientific explorer [is accorded] easy access to the vast interior of Africa, which notwithstanding recent explorations remains a terra incognita to the European world."[2] These were some of the arguments presented by the Native

1. C.O. 87/107, 1874, 6th May, C.H.Kortright to Pope Hennessy; C.O. 87/108, 1875, 20th June, H.Cooper to Carnavon.
2. C.O. 87/108, 1875, 7th October & 18th October, Petitions, pub. The Hour, 5th November 1875.

Association for the consideration of the senior British merchants in the colony with a view to "enlisting interest ... and engaging interference to arrest the sanction of Parliament to the proposed Transfer."[1]

Not only was their petition given publicity in The Hour, a British newspaper, but a deputation of merchants sought an interview with Carnavon to expound on these views. But no encouragement was found at the Colonial Office. Far from being solvent as the Gambia claimed, the Minister showed that it had been in debt to the Crown Agents for a long time, and that war on its borders might involve the settlement in further difficulties. The Government's plan then was "not Cession but a mere Exchange ... for the purpose of rounding off a rather inconvenient property."[2]

This was not a satisfactory answer to men of business, so that most of them began to press for compensation in lieu of "compulsory withdrawal". Lintott, Spink and Company (the successors of Forster and Smith), had already requested that in negotiating transfer the "purchase by [the French] of our fixed and floating property in the River Gambia may be taken into consideration, and that we may be fully indemnified for the loss we shall sustain in being compelled to retire from the trade."[3] This was not unreasonable while the threat of transfer seemed so near to becoming a reality. What is surprising is that British merchants, and indeed African entrepreneurs, had restrained themselves from making an issue of compensation for the greater part of the

1. C.O. 87/108, 1875, 18th October, Petition to Messrs. Thos. Brown, Thos. Quin, Thos. Chown, Lintott & Spink.
2. C.O. 87/109, 1876, February, Lord Carnavon to the Deputation of Merchants.
3. C.O. 87/108, 1875, 8th Sept., Lintott, Spink & Co. to Carnavon.

decade in which they lived under the French threat.

Now, according to the Administrator, most merchants were preoccupied with securing compensation for businesses disorganized by the uncertainties of the River trade. Quin and Brown were not doing good business; the prestige of Brown had been severely damaged by the Anna Evans Affair of 1873. "Mr. Brown comes very badly out of the affair," Fortescue had commented. "It is a question whether his conduct would not warrant his expulsion from Council."[1] And he was then the only unofficial in the Council. In 1874, Brown did resign his commission. Sensibly, he was negotiating to sell his property and business to a French firm.[2] Alternatively, retirement from the colony on a lump sum (it was hoped that France would pay a substantial sum for Government property out of which compensation claims would be settled) must now have seemed both attractive and inevitable to a man "so advanced in years,"[3] as Brown was pathetically described by Henry Cooper, Acting Administrator.

When all efforts seemed to have been of no avail, one final summing-up petition emanated from a cross-section of the inhabitants of Bathurst which dwelt on the geographical and economic advantages of the Gambia, but made no mention of compensation! The British Government, it warned, was about to give to France five hundred miles of uninterrupted coastline from which British commerce and British shipping would be excluded; indeed the French would also possess the main rivers of West Africa. The petitioners

1. C.O. 87/104, 1873, vol.1. 28th Dec., C.O. Minute, E.F.
2. C.O. 87/107, 1874, 6th November, C.H.Kortright to Lord Carnavon.
3. C.O. 87/105, 1873, vol.2. 16th August, H.T.M.Cooper to Kimberley.

rightly deprecated the fact that they were about to lose "their birthright and property" for the sake of providing additional funds for the Gold Coast and Lagos. "It is a principle of elementary justice and human dignity," they concluded, "that man's rights and properties cannot be disposed of without his consent, even if it were for his enjoyment ...."[1] Six years before, Liberated Africans had reminded Earl Granville of a similar rule of the ancients - "that the King cannot confer a favour on one subject which occasions loss and injury to another."[2] Somewhat dramatically, and unexpectedly, on the 7th of April 1876, a letter from Lord Carnavon informed the public that "the negotiations for exchange of territory with France have been broken off ...."[3]

Once again transfer had been dropped for political reasons, and because of moral pressure which had been brought to bear on the Secretary of State. There was however no guarantee given that the question would not be resumed, as it was to be in the 'eighties. Transfer was in fact one of the most controversial issues of the century on which public opinion was expressed with vehemence. The British Government held the same position throughout a decade of negotiation: As the Gambia settlement did not 'pay', it was expedient to exchange it for colonies that would fit into their scheme for the West African settlements. That objections would be made to such a proposal officials well knew, but it was hoped that mid-Victorian anti-imperialism would carry policy through, as it nearly did. Though events in

1. C.O. 87/109, 1876, 29th Feb., Merchants & traders to Carnavon.
2. Petition of Liberated Africans to Granville, 20th April 1870, pub. Af. Times, June 1870.
3. C.O. 87/109, 1876, 7th April, Carnavon to merchants & traders.

Europe put up barriers through which negotiation was impossible, it was really articulate British and African opinion, organized and directed by men like Fitzgerald, Brown, Finden and Richards, which brought pressure to bear on successive administrations that finally defeated the French proposal. In protesting against transfer, all sections of Gambia society had rallied under the same banner, a truly significant achievement. But throughout it all, it was articulate African opinion that was the deciding factor.

CHAPTER VIII

POWER STRUGGLE IN THE HINTERLAND AND THE PROBLEM OF INVOLVEMENT - 1862-1894.

In 1862, British jurisdiction in the Gambia was limited to four isolated pockets bordering on that River, a total area of about sixty-nine square miles; but in the riverain states extending along three hundred miles of its course, the British Government had entered into treaties with African chiefs. While such treaties did not guarantee the British trader against the natural hazards of river societies, they did protect his life unless he took up arms against such rulers during a punitive expedition organised from Bathurst. Unrest in the River with resultant skirmishes, pillages, and indeed violence, was not unfamiliar to British traders. But it was the decline of traditional authority in the Mandinka states of the region, caused by the unsatisfactory condition of Islam in them, which not only protracted the state of violence, but altered its intensity considerably. For the jihad which was proclaimed in the Gambia in the mid-nineteenth century meant organized warfare in nearly all states for almost fifty years.

States like Barra had been established by Mandinkas who had come down to the banks of the Gambia after the disintegration of the medieval empires of the Sudan. Amari Sonko, a Mandinka warrior, was by tradition regarded as one of these invaders from the interior. Having fought several battles

with the Wolof king of Salum (Burba Salum or Barsally), he subjugated Barra, Koular and Baddibu which he then formed into one kingdom; but after his death the kingdom was divided between his sons, Barra becoming a separate kingdom.[1] And according to Francis Moore's evidence, in the eighteenth century the king of Barra, though virtually independent, paid tribute to the ruler of Salum. There was, in fact, no overlord with sovereign power over any extensive area on the River; rather, political authority among indigenous peoples in the Gambia was uneasily shared by numerous chieftains, each of whom assumed the title of 'Mansa' (translated 'king' by early explorers and traders). Each jealously guarded his domain from the encroachment of rivals.

Islamic religion and culture had penetrated all the Mandinka states in the River, even though the degree of penetration did not always extend beyond the adoption of the elements of material culture - personal habits, clothing, Arabic terminology. Indeed the process of religious change in such societies had been long and unhurried, an infiltration rather than a radical revolution; so that in assimilating Islamic culture, Africans had rejected no more of their own indigenous culture than was absolutely necessary. In short, until the reform movements of the mid-nineteenth century in the Gambia, religious life rested on a double foundation - indigenous beliefs and ceremonies as "underlayer and the Islamic superstructure."[2] It was this reciprocal influence of Islam and African cultures which the reformers of the nineteenth

1. C.O. 87/100, 1871, vol. 2. 27th Sept. Thomas Brown to T.F.Callaghan, Administrator.

2. J.S. Trimingham, "Islam in West Africa." (O.U.P. 1959) pp. 36-43.

century sought to destroy. Such tolerance towards traditional usages and habits only produced a debased faith, and stimulated violent attempts at reform.

That Mandinka rulers of states showed no sympathy for the jihadis was not only due to their fear of losing political control, but was possibly a reflection of their own ignorance of, and unfamiliarity with, the doctrines and principles of their faith. That many of them professed that religion, even where they were incorrigible drunkards,[1] was borne out by Francis Moore who lived and traded among them for five years. In general, he found that the small nucleus of "Mahometans or Busherines" in the River abstained from drink and kept strictly to their devotions, being able to read and write Arabic "which they take care to teach their children, there being Schoolmasters among them for that purpose ...."[2] The influence of Mahommedan clerics in village societies, where they were often traders, was important; for as members of the chief's entourage (Portuguese explorers had described Wolof chieftains with Mauretanian teachers in their entourage),[3] they were given official recognition by political authority. And from the common people, especially the Mandinkas, they received such "great veneration," according to Francis Moore, "that if any of them are ill, they apply to a Mahometan for cure ....[desiring] them only to write a sort of a note on a small piece of paper for them to wear about them...."[4] Thus Moore concluded that from the

1. Francis Moore, "Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa," (London, 1738), p. 39.
2. Moore, "Travels", p.145.
3. D.P.Gamble, "The Wolof of Senegambia", (London International African Institute, 1957) p.70.
4. Moore, "Travels", p.39.

business of local physician the Mahommedan cleric made a substantial living and was "generally richer ... than the generality of the Mundingoes."

Outside the religious sphere, too, Muslims wielded considerable influence, for the adoption by indigenous societies of elements of Islamic law inevitably transformed their social institutions."[1] J.B. Durand, a French traveller in Sene-Gambia in the early nineteenth century, found an Alcaide in every large town, in whom executive and judicial powers were combined, and whose office was hereditary. His duty was "to preserve order, to receive the tribute imposed upon travellers, and to preside at the sittings of the tribunal of justice." Though customary law was the foundation of legal institutions in the River, and was usually the basis on which decisions were made by judges, it was modified by the addition of Islamic regulations, appeal being sometimes made to the Koran. For this reason, professional interpreters of the Koran were allowed to plead in court;[2] and these men were Muslims. If the penetration of Islam in the riverain states of the Gambia before the reform movement was largely superficial, it had nevertheless affected most areas of life, thereby weakening the structure of traditional cultures and indeed of traditional political authority. The way had been prepared for the success of the jihad.

There were, however, stories of the persecution of Muslims by certain Mandinka chiefs. British settlers on MacCarthy Island in 1823 had found a small hamlet of Muslims at one corner of the Island called Morocunda.[3]

1. Trimingham, "Islam in West Africa", p.43.
2. J.B.Durand, "A voyage to Senegal", (London 1806) p.39.
3. Moister, "Missionary Labours", p.151; Morocunda in the Gambia means "holy town".

At that distance from the centre of the kingdom of Catabar they probably felt safe from persecution. It was not fear of persecution alone that caused the isolation of Muslim villages in the region, for devout converts to the faith seemed to have preferred to separate themselves from Mandinka society, and, with permission of the traditional rulers to form units of their own, in which they could more diligently follow the precepts of the Prophet and instruct the young with little distraction and annoyance. In the kingdom of Barra, for example, the Muslims had built five towns along the banks of the River away from the interior towns which formed the centre of the kingdom.[1] Yet slowly, Muslim towns increased in size and importance, and by the mid-nineteenth century a large number of them had grown up alongside the traditional towns. From the king of Brekama's complaint to the Governor in Bathurst once the religious wars were advancing, it would seem that Muslims had succeeded in entrenching themselves before the traditional rulers, to whom they owed allegiance, ever began to understand its significance. The king explained that his great grandfather, Marmoodoo, "allowed them [the Muslims] to settle at Cojooroo [Gunjur] as a then poor and helpless people, [but] they have now advanced so far as to make war on Marmoodoo's great grandson ...."[2]

By the 'sixties it was obvious even to the Governor in St. Mary's that traditional authority was being seriously undermined in many states; and

1. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 28th Sept., d'Arcy to Sam Blackall.
2. C.O. 87/107, 1874, 5th May, King of Brekama (Ceesee Angelah) to C.H.Kortright.

Governor d'Arcy had observed that the chiefs had not "the ability to reconstruct their government."[1] The death of Demba Sonko, king of Barra, in 1862 precipitated the decay of that Mandinka state; and in another decade the new ruler was described as "a very weak chief".[2] Indeed, by the 'eighties, nearly all chiefs were reported to have lost their authority to their Muslim subjects, and "shorn of all or nearly all power for the furtherance of good and the repression of evil ...."[3] The collapse of authority in Barra was repeated in turn in other states. Jarra country, on the south bank of the River, became a battle ground when Muslim subjects refused to pay customs to their rulers by whose permission they had built themselves towns there.

Such a 'revolution' was due as much to internal conditions as to external stimulus. While rum, for instance, remained one of the principal articles of trade in the River, so long must devout Muslim clerics have felt the need for reform, by compulsion. Latent discontent within River societies was not improved by a political system which excluded Muslims from the role of chiefs or alcaides, except in their own towns. In the setting of the Western Sudan through which swept religious trends in the nineteenth century, it was inevitable that the bond that was growing among the scholars of a great teacher, and indeed among the teachers themselves, would be directed everywhere against traditional authority which still clung tenaciously to non-Islamic beliefs.

1. C.O. 87/74, 1862, 24th Oct., d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/100, 1871, vol.2. 2nd October, T.F.Callaghan to A.E.Kennedy.
3. C.O. 87/118, 1882, vol.1. 13th May, V.S. Gouldsbury to Samuel Rowe.

The story of the nature of the struggle which was the result of religious tensions in the Gambia and outside it, and of the extent to which it involved the British government and British subjects in that colony is the subject of this chapter. J.M. Gray states that it was the Pan Islamic movement which had caused the French much trouble in Algeria in 1847 and 1848 which was the immediate cause of the religious wars in the Gambia. For emissaries from the Mediterranean coast had arrived in the Senegal and the Gambia to preach a jihad against all non-Islamic communities. According to the same source, a Moor named Haji Ismail was travelling through the Western Sudan at this time preaching a jihad, and though there is no evidence that he visited the Gambia, nevertheless he had agents there. Among them, another Moor named Omar, who had been concerned in Abid al Qadir's rising against the French in Algeria in 1847.[1]

While events in North Africa must have had repercussions across the Sahara, emitting sparks into an explosive situation in the Western Sudan, the jihad which was proclaimed in that region was less dependent upon the Algerian rebellions of the 1840s (which had unique causes in the French invasion of Algeria), than upon reforming movements indigenous to the Western Sudan itself. For such movements can be traced back into the eighteenth century with the foundation of the Qadiriya and Tijaniyya brotherhoods which exercised important missionary and political roles in West Africa.[2] Each religious order was under the authority of a shaikh (a religious leader),

1. J.M.Gray, "History", pp.388 & 391.
2. Trimingham, "Islam in West Africa", pp.91-93; H.A.R.Gibb, "Modern Trends in Islam", (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1947, & C.U.P.), chapter II.

whose official subordinates enrolled, trained and initiated new members. It was an Arab named al-Mukhtar who had founded a 'monastery' in Azawad, north of Timbuctu in the eighteenth century, which became the centre of the Qadiriyya order and produced jihad leaders like Uthman dan Fodio who led the movement into Hausaland. It was, however, the Tijani Way which was preached with great vigour among the Tuculors and Wolofs of the Senegal by the Trarza Moors in the nineteenth century which played an important part in the islamization of the Gambia.

Trimingham rightly asserts that the "most important event in the history of the Tijaniyya in West Africa was the initiation of Umar Tal (1794/7-1864) ...."[1] He was a Tuculor born at Oloar near Podor in Futa Toro in the Senegal; and while he was on pilgrimage in Mecca, he was appointed khalifa[2] for the Sudan, with title of al-hajj. On his return from Mecca, where he had spent a number of years, he first initiated Muslim clerics of Futa Jalon, from where his movement spread throughout the western Sudan.[3] As a means of binding devotees to the cause of the jihad, Umar imposed Tijani allegiance as the official cult of the peoples he conquered. His policy was to overthrow traditional governments and then to force conversion on the people; and between Futa Jalon and Timbuctu he met with great success. But it was in the lower Senegal, in his own homeland of Futa Toro and its environs, that he met humiliating defeat. General Louis Faidherbe, the then Governor of

1. Trimingham, "Islam in West Africa", pp.94-97.
2. Khalifa, "the initiating leader of a tariqa", i.e. a Sufi brotherhood (Trimingham).
3. General Louis Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", (Paris, 1889) p.159 ff.

Senegal, saw the jihad as a political force directed towards territorial expansion; and he organized military campaigns to resist Umar's incursions.

French involvement with Umar and his disciples, whose objective was to secure an alliance of all Muslims for the extermination of unbelievers, was to affect Government and opinion in the Gambia, where the preaching of the jihad was an integral part of the movement which had swept through the whole of the Western Sudan by the 'sixties. But whereas in the Gambia, British policy was extremely cautious in its dealings with African chiefs in order to avoid involvement in the hinterland, French policy under the Governorship of Louis Faidherbe was the reverse, for the French themselves had embarked on a policy of political domination in the Senegal. They were as determined to subjugate the native states in that territory, primarily to secure trade, as the leaders of the jihad were relentless about their objective. French and Muslims then were rivals in a way that was not comparable in the Gambia situation. In Faidherbe's own words, the French cause was lost if resistance were not put up against Umar's progress in the upper Senegal, and if he were allowed to enter the lower River.[1] In other words, France was to take the offensive even to the extent of organising elaborate and expensive campaigns against all who stood in the way of French objectives.

From the beginning, Umar had declared that he did not want a war with the Europeans, and had gone so far as to approach Governor Protet, Faidherbe's predecessor, for ammunition and an officer to assist him in his war against

1. Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", p.171.

the 'idolaters'.[1] Umar was prepared to live in peace with the Europeans if they would limit their activities to the pursuit of commerce and would not form settlements in the country or send vessels of war on the River Senegal. These were unacceptable conditions, so Faidherbe stated, for it had long been proved impossible to pursue trade without protection among "des barbares". Indeed, far from being prepared to abandon or demolish their settlements and forts, the French were proposing to extend their frontiers further into the interior.[2] Theirs was perhaps a more realistic policy than that adopted by the British in the Gambia, who, while desiring to develop the commerce of that territory,refused adequate protection to traders in factories outside British jurisdiction, on the grounds of expense. In Sene-Gambia, it was found to be an impracticable policy; it only meant that British policy would in the future have to follow in the direction consistently pursued by the French since the mid nineteenth century.

Interference in wars of religion, however, was found to be more than expensive; Faidherbe described such wars as "impitoyables et le fanatisme inspire un courage qui ne recule devant rien, puisque, pour ceux qui en sont animés, la mort elle-même est regardée comme un bien." It was the bond created among the adherents of a universal religion like Islam which transcended tribal barriers and became a powerful integrative factor. Thus Touculors, Fulas, Serahulis, and even Bambaras, fought with singleness

1. Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", p.160.
2. Ibid. p.170.

of purpose under the direction of Umar and his talaba,[1] irrespective of their allegiance to the political rulers of their own states. This fanatical element of 'disciples' formed the vanguard of Umar's forces, carrying guns on their shoulders, with veiled faces, they led the massacre of the inhabitants of all villages which showed any resistance, "psalmodiant les versets du Koran d'une voix sinistre." It was all in keeping with the mystery that surrounded their khalifa, who was believed to be endowed with supernatural power and was recognised as "prophète envoye de Dieu ...."[2] Indeed the leaders of jihad were politically astute, employing such tactics as would both undermine the established regime in the states they attacked, and that would bind subjected peoples to their cause. Umar imposed the oath of allegiance to the Tijaniya order on all.

Starting from the vantage point of Futa Jallon, where the formation of a Fulbe theocratic state was to be "the primary factor leading to the diffusion of Islam throughout western Guinea",[3] Umar, with considerable and fairly well-organised forces, carried the war through the states of Kaarta and Segou (against the pagan Bambara),[4] into those of the upper Senegal, where he established his influence inspite of French resistance. Nor was he deterred from extending his mission into the lower Senegal knowing the strength of the French defences in that region; for he overestimated the advantages offered

1. Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", pp.164 & 165; talaba, talib (sing.) = student, disciple [Trimingham].
2. Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", pp. 160 & 161.
3. Trimingham, "Islam in West Africa", p.18.
4. Ibid., p.14.

by another theocratic state (his native country of Futa Toro) as a base of operations into nominally Muslim Wolof kingdoms beyond.[1] Indeed, in the very centre of the colony, in St. Louis (Ndar) itself, Umar had his agents and many ardent supporters.

According to a letter quoted by Faidherbe, Umar urged these adherents to the faith to make war on all who did not believe in God (animists), or follow the true religion and the commands of the Prophet (the Jews and the Christians). Any reconciliation with such persons, he declared, would make them infidels too.[2] That he was alleged to have called the Governor a tyrant who was to be made to submit to his cause, showed that inspite of his earlier declarations, Umar had turned against European colonists. And Faidherbe who had had six years' experience in the Muslim world of North Africa, in particular, Algeria,[3] was not likely to overlook the threats of a leader of jihad. He believed that it was a policy of the Muslims to raise disaffection between the citizens of the colony and the French administration, with a view to foiling French expansion in the Senegal.

In 1864, Umar having succeeded in establishing himself as ruler of an extensive empire from Futa Jallon to Timbuctu, on both banks of the Niger, for a distance of over 1,500 miles, met a violent death at the hands of Fula rebels of Massina.[4] He had, however, nominated his son, Amadu, as his successor.[5] Governor Faidherbe, too, left the colony the following year,

1. Wolof kingdoms had been penetrated by Islam since the fifteenth century. Trimingham, p.13.
2. Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", p.164.
3. Ibid., p.121.
4. Ibid., p.299.
5. Trimingham, "Islam in West Africa", p.143, Note 1.

recommending to his successor not to lose sight of his project to link the Senegal to the Niger by establishing settlements at strategic points.[1] The departure of these protagonists did not resolve the war, for Umar's supporters were as determined to continue the subjugation of the Wolof and Serer states in the lower Senegal as the new Governor, Pinet-Laprade (who had first arrived in the colony as a young captain in 1849), was resolved to extend and consolidate French influence in that region and elsewhere.[2] Power struggle along the Senegal River had as its goal the extension of political influence, for even to Muslims engaged in a holy war, it was recognised that "the government of a country follows that of its chief. If the chief is a Muslim then the country is dar-al-Islam, if a pagan then it is a pagan country."[3] The ambition of jihad leaders was, therefore, to create theocratic states; in pursuing war they were as much interested in political power as in religious reform.

The struggle which was extended to the banks of the Gambia in the latter half of the nineteenth century was simply an offshoot of the movement which had been organised by al hajj Umar from 1848. Maha Bah, Fodey Silla, and Fodey Cabba, the chief clerical reformers in the Gambia, were lesser Muslim

1. Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", p.300.
2. Pinet-Laprade was to subdue the Jolas of Casamance.
3. M. Bello, "Infaq-al-Maisur", quoted by Trimingham, "Islam", p.33.

scholars inspired to action by the career of Umar, and, like him, determined to carve kingdoms for themselves from the indigenous riverain states of the Gambia. Indeed, it is significant that none of these jihad leaders was a native of the country; they were all foreigners who had received their Islamic education 'abroad'. Maba, for example, had already taken part in the subjugation of some of the Wolof states of the Senegal ever before he showed any interest in the Gambia.

Amady or Mahaba, commonly known as Maba, was, like Umar, a native of Futa Toro and a Touculor by birth. Information about his early life is scanty, except that by 1861, by his devoutness, he had been recognised as a Muslim cleric with a small band of ardent disciples. He may very well have been initiated at some earlier date as a khalifa in the Tijaniya order, but there is no reference to this in the documents. Nevertheless, he had grown sufficiently powerful by 1861 to subjugate Rip, a province of Saloum. Indeed, he was deeply involved in the politics of the Wolof states to the northward, having entered into alliances with some of their chiefs, such as Macodou, damel of Cayor,[1] who had been expelled from his kingdom by the French. Under their joint alliance, Saloum had been attacked and subjugated, so that by 1864, Maba had reached the height of his power, with the title of ruler or Almamy[2] of Saloum in French, and of Baddibu in British, territory.[3] It was not only the French government that accorded him this recognition, but the chiefs of Cayor, Baol, Jollof and Sine had agreed to his title if he would respect their

1. damel was the official title of the ruler of Cayor.
2. Almamy = al-imam: West Sudan = politico-religious head of a Muslim community [Trimingham, "Islam"].
3. Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", p.277.

territories.

His ascendancy to power in British territory had been achieved in the usual way of Muslims of his day, by quiet penetration dramatically followed by effective force. Maba had entered Baddibu as a trader and settled with his companions in a separate village, by permission of the Mandinka king. It was the British attack upon the kingdom of Baddibu in 1861 to exact compensation for robberies previously committed on British merchants which provided the Muslims with the internal breakdown of authority that was their signal for proclaiming a jihad. Maba had sued for peace and signed a treaty with Governor d'Arcy in the absence of the legitimate ruler of the state, an action that was interpreted by the king as treachery. For this reason he sought to kill Maba, thus creating an open breach between the factions in his kingdom.

Town after town was burnt down and many of the natives of Baddibu were obliged to seek refuge across the River Gambia in Tendaba, where they attempted to organise resistance. Meanwhile, circumstances favoured the cause of the rebel reformers; for the death of Demba Sonko king of Barra in 1862 opened the way to the subjugation of that kingdom too. Muslim forces were marshalled under one Amar Faal, a 'lieutenant' of Maba's, the king's capital at Beringding was destroyed, as were other towns, to the very frontier of British territory in the Ceded Mile.[1] The war was then carried across the River to Kiang in the south bank; but Maba was defeated at Kwinella.[2] By the

1. C.O. 87/73, 1862, 22nd May, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/76, 1863, 5th June, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

intervention of Governor d'Arcy, peace was signed between the British and Maba's representative in March 1863.[1]

In that year the radius of war brought Saloum within the Muslim compass, an event that directly affected the economy of both the British, and French, colony. To the British in St. Mary's the destruction of towns in Saloum "the granary of Bathurst" was a great hardship. Governor d'Arcy bemoaned the fact that the five thousand inhabitants of the Island were fed on corn from that fertile region, which explained why numerous petitions "from our traders who have lost their goods and cattle, and in one instance a loss of life ...." were pouring into Government House. A further problem which faced the Government was the growing number of refugees which was entering British territory; Sereres and Wolofs, accompanied by their flocks and herds sought British protection at Berwick town in the Ceded Mile.[2] Some of them crossed over into Bathurst and British Combo, thus straining the public funds at a time when the colony was in debt.

Governor d'Arcy would have liked the means to "check this Fanatic: the customs of the king of Dahomey are not so dreadful as the blood-thirsty career of this Mahommedan ....", he wrote.[3] It was only the restraining power of the Colonial Office and the limitations of the forces under his command which maintained British neutrality at this period. The Duke of Newcastle agreed that the Governor was to be instructed "to abstain to the utmost of his power from either commencing or joining in any measures of hostility arising out of

1. C.O. 87/76, 1863, 23rd March, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/76, 1863, 24th March, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
3. Ibid.

these native wars."[1] d'Arcy's views on the progress of Islam in the region were sometimes extreme and highly prejudiced, because his experience of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 had made him bitterly opposed to the adherents of that religion. But, like his contemporary, Faidherbe, he did show insight into the religious movement that had swept through west African states in the mid-nineteenth century. He affirmed that the Muslims wanted "the Government of the country, knowing full well that the universality of the religion will surely follow the temporal power."[2] In short, that the civil war in the Gambia was not so much caused by religion as by "policy". This partial misunderstanding of the motives of the leaders of jihad resulted in open preference for the traditional rulers, who, as the Governor believed, stood for "the cause of order", and enabled him to apply to a chief for redress when a trader was robbed.

Certainly, the French in Senegal shared this opinion about their Muslim neighbours. In April 1863, J.B. Jauréguiberry, captain in the French navy, while on a mission in the Senegal warned Governor d'Arcy in a letter that sooner or later Maba was bound to attack the European "whose influence tend so much to counteract his project .... but if we allow him the first opportunity of attacking us openly," the letter read, "his power would only become more consolidated, and we would become more isolated and all commerce would be ruined." He pointed out that this had been the tactics of Muslims in the Senegal, resulting in a series of interminable wars, which only French military

1. C.O. 87/76, 1863, 16th April, T.F.Elliott to Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 21st January, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

operations repulsed effectively, the enemies in Futa Toro having "received a rough lesson."[1] For d'Arcy, then, the dilemma of involvement was the major issue of the 'sixties, with French administrators across the frontier, and British merchants in his Council, urging him to resist aggression with force, against Colonial Office instructions to maintain a strict neutrality.

Maba, having started his career as jihad leader in the Wolof states of the Senegal, maintained his interest in that territory almost to the extent of neglecting to extend the reform movement into Mandinka states of the Gambia outside Baddibu and Barra. This was partly because a programme for enforcing conversion upon the Wolofs of Senegal had long been outlined, in pursuit of which alliances were already formed with the Moors and Touculors, while Maba seemed less willing to break faith with a non-aggressive Government like that of the British in the Gambia, than with the French. For whereas he took pains to observe the terms of the treaty signed with d'Arcy in 1863, Governor Pinet-Laprade of Senegal complained that "in defiance of a treaty made in 1864, [Maba] has ravaged the Jollofs our allies and pillaged several villages under the protection of this colony." Such acts of spoliation, he announced, had obliged him to undertake an expedition against Maba.[2] But the French expedition of December 1865 was not decisive , for though Maba was reported to have lost two-thirds of his army, the French Governor had been severely wounded and his troops depleted by fever.[3] It was French involvement in

1. C.O. 87/76, 1863, 5th April, J.B. Jauréguiberry to d'Arcy.
2. C.O. 87/83, 1865, vol.2. 22nd Nov., d'Arcy to Newcastle, enclosure - letter from Pinet-Laprade, 11th Nov.
3. C.O. 87/83, 1865, vol.2. 23rd Dec., d'Arcy to Newcastle.

native politics, by which they undertook to defend their numerous allies, which created a third dimension in the religious wars, and delayed their outcome.

Muslim attempt at domination shifted between the lower Senegal and the lower Gambia, so that resistance met in one area was answered by aggression in the other. This happened in 1866, following upon the campaign of 1865, when the Muslims in the Ceded Mile broke the peace by burning one of the towns of the king of Barra, having first lifted several heads of cattle. This was British territory even though British courts had not been set up, and d'Arcy repudiated a policy of neutrality to protect British subjects. It was his good fortune that H.M.S. "Mullet" entered the harbour then, thereby providing the means of taking prompt action without awaiting instructions from the Secretary of State. Tubababcolong, the chief Muslim stronghold in the Ceded Mile, was blockaded, and five other of their towns were burnt and the stockades pulled down; for the Governor did not see how he could have acted otherwise, "consistent with justice, humanity and the honour of the flag."[1]

Maba's end came violently and suddenly in 1867 when he again invaded a Wolof state in alliance with the French. This was Sine, whose ruler he had long tried to subdue, but who was well defended by the French. It was indeed the superior reinforcements provided by Pinet-Laprade for the king of Sine which won the day. At a fierce battle on the 18th of July 1867, at a village called Somb, Maba's forces were routed, Lat Dor a rebel of Cayor and other

1. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 3rd July, d'Arcy to Blackall.

allies escaped; but Maba, his son and nephew, and his principal lieutenants were killed.[1] Thus ended a period of bitter struggle which had raged in Sine Saloum for six years. Maba's career had been cut short, before he had sufficient time to consolidate his power in any of the states he had overrun, so that his successor, who was his brother Mahmoud n'Dare Bah, was to struggle to establish his authority.

The wars of the 'sixties were significant in the development of the Gambia settlement for they compelled the Government and communities in St. Mary's to engage in serious thinking about the tribes on the mainland. Maba had demonstrated that he was more than a petty warring chief who could be controlled by policy formulated by either the government of Bathurst or St. Louis. He was indeed a dynamic force in the River, and, like Umar vis-à-vis St. Louis, had within the capital of the British colony a body of ardent supporters, so that he became the cause of bitter disagreement between people and government there. Even Governor d'Arcy was impressed by his commanding presence, standing "head and shoulders above the people;"[2] and Faidherbe, too, had written that he wielded considerable influence and enjoyed almost superstitious veneration from the Wolofs and their neighbours.[3]

1. Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", pp.286-288.
2. C.O. 87/80, 1864, 24th October, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
3. Faidherbe, "Le Sénégal", p.278.

British Africans trading in the River supported Maba's regime, not because they were interested in his religious preaching, but because he was "a great protector of trade." Under his discipline, robbers, rogues and refugees had been driven away from trading stations; and instead of robberies and floggings which they had formerly experienced under Mandinka rule (the chiefs not being capable of restraining avaricious subordinates), they enjoyed a modicum of protection. This element had, therefore, opposed any suggestion of an Anglo-French expedition against such a "great public benefactor"; such action, they said, would be tantamount to "ingratitude and stupidity".[1]

But sympathy for the Muslim reformers was not shared by the Government nor by the merchants of Bathurst. The Governor, for example, was convinced that Maba only got the support of those who were his accomplices in the continental slave trade which the outbreak of war had revived.[2] Since Muslims bought very little from the merchants and produced hardly any articles for the export market, it was concluded that their desire was "to be independent of the white trader."[3] Such then were the conflicting views on the power struggle in the hinterland, that though the policy laid down by Colonial Office was neutrality, the local Government on one hand, and urbanised Africans on the other, firmly supported opposite sides in the contest.

1. Extracts from twenty letters to F.Fitzgerald from Gambian traders, pub. African Times, Sept. 1864.
2. C.O. 87/80, 1864, vol.2. 25th Sept., d'Arcy to Newcastle. The Governor had received anonymous letters reporting on the handsome profits made by British African traders who transported slaves across the River Gambia.
3. C.O. 87/73, 1862, 16th June, d'Arcy to Newcastle.

It was not easy to assess the extent to which the wars improved or reduced security of traders in the River, but from the experience of those who traded in Baddibu, it would seem that in that state, at least, Maba had forced up an umbrella of protection under which traders operated effectively, short-lasting though this proved to be by subsequent events. It is not unlikely that he did attempt to tame the pests of trading stations by pressing them into his armies or scaring them off the land. Among Muslim leaders, Maba was remarkable for his interest in trade and agriculture.[1] Once Baddibu was unquestionably under his control, he turned to its internal organization, publicly inviting traders to enter freely into the country. "I will give them authority to sell their goods as they like," he wrote in Arabic, "commencing from the part of Ngaryane right down to Cower. None of my men will trouble them," he declared, "and if any of my people owes any trader and refused to pay, let the trader come and make report to me ...."[2] To the French Commandant at Kaolack he wrote in the same strain, pleading to be given a fair trial to show that his great object was to promote trade by providing peace and protection for traders. "....I have now ordered the whole of my men to cultivate the ground and to sow seeds. And I do believe that you will have no occasion of complaint ... when comparing the former days with the present..."[3]

If the development of the economy of Baddibu and Saloum was one of Maba's objectives, it was not easily attainable in the midst of a jihad. Even if

1. Trimingham, "Islam in West Africa", p.187: "Islam has taken little interest in agriculture, which has no essential place in legal texts ..."
2. Translation of Maba's letter to d'Arcy, pub. African Times, May 1867.
3. Copy of Maba's letter from Macca, Salem, 1st June 1864, pub. Af. Times, Sept. 1864.

he had wished it otherwise, his primary objective was to vanquish all enemies within reach in order to extend his influence, and a bellicose policy defeated his development programme. Though Governor d'Arcy was prepared to admit that "he has protected our traders and invariably treated the Governor's Agent from time to time with respect and hospitality ..."[1], Maba's armies continued to live on the land by seizing large herds of cattle belonging to British merchants. It is, however, possible that had Maba lived, he may have produced stability in the states under his control. But the anarchic situation which the jihad produced in all the Gambian states after his death confirmed the view that the leaders of jihad "were rarely capable of affecting the transition from military rule to a stable civil administration", and that their wars merely led to political disintegration and instability.[2]

This was partly the reason for French resistance to Muslim incursions, and for a pro-French policy advocated by European merchants in St. Mary's. To men of business, the loss of the old foundations of authority could not but disrupt trade and bring financial loss to them. Governor Faidherbe's purposeful campaigns against al hajj Umar were therefore advocated as the only effective means of reducing Muslim control in the River Gambia too. Continual native wars caused incalculable misery, so that "it is really a mercy when some strong arm of a civilised power interferes in Africa to keep the peace among them, although it may be attended with bloodshed at the commencement"; this was mercantile opinion.[3]

1. C.O. 87/80, 1864, 24th October, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. Trimingham, "Islam in West Africa", p.142.
3. From our Correspondent [Gambia], pub. African Times, June 1863.

They therefore welcomed the French in their neighbourhood, while detesting them as commercial rivals. Like merchants everywhere, their main concern was for a 'pax' under which commercial activity could be profitably pursued, so that the disruption of River economy by the interruption of agriculture, resulting sometimes in famine among the farmers, apart from bringing financial loss, gave the mercantile community in Bathurst genuine cause for concern. In their view, a colonial policy which wilfully disregarded tribal politics in the hinterland was mere "playing at Government", and unlikely to produce effective results. "If the British Government mean to do anything for these countries," one of them complained in a letter to the African Times, "they must compel the kings and chiefs to keep the peace with one another ...."[1] This was in fact advocating a policy of involvement in order to achieve peace by methods adopted by the French in Senegal: "When they are arrogant and very offensive," they wrote, "give them a jolly good thrashing, and then afterwards shake hands with them ...."[2] If the situation did not improve in the riverain states, they even suggested in their anxiety that it might be "far better to let the French have the river ... provided some arrangement could be made with them for freedom of trade ...."[3]

Opinion on the struggle for power among the interior peoples, and on policy pursued by the two European governments in such states varied according

1. From our Correspondent, African Times, July 1863.
2. Unsigned article on "Policy of non-intervention in Western Africa", African Times, May 1867.
3. From our Correspondent, African Times, June 1863.

to the interests of particular groups. Within St. Mary's itself, opinion conflicted to such an extent that Governors reflected this inconsistency in their policy. The Muslim element domiciled there, which openly gave support to Maba and was suspected of spying on the colonial Government, was rivalled by a growing number of refugees, depressed and bitter against all Muslims. Liberated African traders fell somewhere between the two groups, while it suited their interests, allying themselves to Maba because under his rule they enjoyed wider scope for trade, including illegitimate trade. It was largely through them that the belligerents in the River were provided with all the powder, shot and provisions they required "to carry on their civil warfare with facility."

In 1864, the Commandant at MacCarthy Island despaired of his efforts at mediation between the contending parties, "for as long as they are provided with the munitions of war from the merchants of this Island," he complained, "so long will they continue the same."[1] European merchants who were the suppliers of all articles of trade, were the most critical of the attitudes of their traders and of the policy of Government. But, like Governor d'Arcy, they preferred the traditional rulers, over whom they exerted some influence, providing the funds out of which annual stipends were paid to them. It was in their interest too to ensure that their credits in the Riverain states were honoured; a show of force to prop up tottering Mandinka governments might, they hoped, preserve the status quo.

1. C.O. 87/79, 1864, 31st May, J.Plumridge to Governor d'Arcy.

In the final analysis, involvement entailed the use of force, so that Government and people were not unreasonably perturbed by the withdrawal of the troops from the Gambia at the height of the disturbances. Merchants with goods in the River claimed protection for their trade and property to which they felt entitled in return for the contribution they made to the revenue in customs duties. In petitioning for a small force to be stationed at MacCarthy Island, they explained that they urged for "no aggressive policy, but simply one of self preservation."[1] Mercantile interests, they felt, were too often subordinated to those of the Government. What they had always wanted was a constant patrol of the River by a gunboat;[2] and even a moderate Governor like Admiral Patey, d'Arcy's successor, was inclined to agree with them. After his visit up river in H.M.S. "Lee", a warship which entered the harbour early in 1869, he reported that it had made a most favourable impression in the riverain states, and recommended that a regular visit of that kind, as far up as MacCarthy Island, was "the only way in which any influence can be brought to bear on the natives ...."[3] It was, however, never easy for Governors of the Gambia to move the Colonial Office in a direction that might involve the use of force or extra expenditure.

Further, the Colonial Office suspected the extreme views expressed by d'Arcy and the merchants on the consequences of Muslim domination in the Gambia. At a distance from the field of struggle, the Secretary of State was

1. C.O. 87/87, 1867, vol.1. 1st June, Merchants' Petition to Newcastle.
2. Extract from Letters to African Times, Sept. 1864.
3. C.O. 87/91, 1869, vol.1. 5th March, Admiral Patey to Governor Kennedy.

able to see the situation in perspective, and to conclude that "we cannot be expected to undertake the protection of a weak tribe against a stronger one, especially where a religious element is involved ...."[1] His guess was that the Muslim leaders would ultimately completely take over all the states, and it was useless to delay the process. Officials outside the Gambia had begun to regard Islam as an effective agency for civilization among tribes with whom Wesleyan missionaries had had little success. Its advantages were not inconsiderable: it was African-directed, it encouraged literacy and condemned drink, albeit by fire and sword. Early Wesleyan missionaries themselves had been impressed by the improvement in mode of behaviour among those who had embraced that religion, and concluded that it was "profitable" to them.[2] In short, political supremacy by the religious reformers seemed to be a possible answer to political instability in the River up to the 'seventies, for which reason Governors were consistently instructed to maintain a strict neutrality, to await the outcome of the struggle, and finally to sign treaties with the victors.

The departure of Governor d'Arcy and the death of Maba in 1867 marked the end of the first phase of the Muslim reform movement in the Gambia. In the north bank states the nature of the struggle altered significantly, degenerating

1. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 5th November, Carnavon to Blackall.
2. Morgan, "Reminiscences", pp.71 & 72.

into a lust for power among rival reformers, all of them the descendants or lieutenants of Maba. While Mahmoud n'Dare Bah, the official successor, was preoccupied with establishing his authority over Baddibu and Saloum, there was little opportunity for establishing stable government in that area of the River. While Maba was motivated by ideals, and showed powers of organization, his successors had not comparable ability and completely failed to guide the reform movement beyond their own limited horizons of personal aggrandisement. This was partly the reason for J.M. Gray's conclusion that the destruction of the old hereditary chieftainships in the Gambia "put back the clock for close on half a century". Muslim leaders, he argued, erected nothing of any permanent value in the place of what had been overthrown, rather that they brought anarchy to the more settled areas of the lower River.[1]

The second phase of the war affected all the states on both banks of the River which comprised the lower Gambia, and was pursued with much violence into the twentieth century. In the 'sixties when Maba was overrunning Mandinka states in the North Bank, the Combo area in the immediate environs of the colony of St. Mary's in the South Bank, had remained fairly peaceful and had attracted large numbers of refugees whose homes had been devastated in Saloum and Baddibu. Following the death of Maba, however, the scene of warfare had shifted southwards, where the jihad against 'pagans' was preached in all its violence by two Muslim clerics - Fodey[2] Silla and Fodey Cabba. Combo had

1. J.M. Gray, "History", pp.428 & 429.
2. Fodey: Tukulor call any Muslim cleric 'modibbo', and the highest 'fodyo'. In Futa Jallon, the most important clergy are the 'fodié', legal experts. Trimingham, "Islam", pp.69 & 70.

in fact been a training field for devout Muslims since the 'fifties, having first come under the influence of Moorish emissaries. Within it too were situated two Muslim strongholds - Gunjur, a 'holy' place in local tradition,[1] and Sucuta (Sabijee) "one of the oldest marabout[2] towns in Combo with the largest mosque in this portion of Africa and celebrated for its Almamys ...."[3] These naturally became the centres of the reform movement, and therefore, from the point of view of the king of Combo and the colonial Government, centres of rebellion.

Disagreement between the reformers and their traditional political rulers in this area had caused little concern in Bathurst at first, Governor O'Connor having then regarded it as a purely domestic affair restricted to two groups within the same kingdom. British merchants, however, had attached greater significance to the breakdown in political authority with its consequent effect upon trade and agriculture, and had persuaded the Governor to mediate between the contending parties. It was the arrival of a British man-of-war in the harbour which moved O'Connor to immediate action. With additional troops at his disposal, he took the field in May 1853 with a view to destroying Sabijee,[4] the centre of Muslim rebellion, and restoring complete authority to the king with whom the Government had been in treaty-relation since 1816. With the success of the expedition, and the expulsion of the rebels from Sabijee, British influence was further extended into Combo by the acquisition

1. A local legend tells of the visit made to Gunjur by the Prophet Muhammed; C.O. 87/80, 1864, 21st Nov., d'Arcy to Newcastle, enclosure, Ex.Co.Minutes, 26th Oct. 1864, The Queen's Advocate described Gunjur as "a hornet's nest.. most necessary to the present and future well-being of our settlement ... [to] be wiped out of the map of Combo."
2. In Gambian terminology, Marabout simply means a devout Muslim.
3. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 8th June, L.S.O'Connor to Sir John Palkington. [Newcastle
4. Ibid.

of territory on the frontier of Foreign and British Combo. O'Connor's unacceptable explantion to the Secretary of State was that extra land was needed for "the growing and increasing wants of the British settlers in the River Gambia."[1] It was on this land that d'Arcy was to locate Liberated Africans and discharged soldiers in the 'sixties.

By the 'seventies, the situation in Combo and adjoining states like Foni had altered with the emergence of the two 'fodeys' whose mission was to pursue organised war against all unbelievers till all accepted conversion. Fodey Silla was supposed to have been born in Gunjur where his mother, a slave woman from the interior, lived. It was not known who his father was as none of his father's relatives lived in that town. However, he had continued his Islamic education at Batenti in Niumi Bato, on the northern frontier of the kingdom of Barra; and when the legitimate chief of Gunjur died, the Muslims there assumed power and invited Silla to be Almamy - their political and religious head.[2]

An equally sketchy description of Fodey Cabba in contemporary documents gives a place called Jacha in the interior as his native town. In a letter to Governor Rowe in 1887, Cabba called himself the son of Shieku Abu Bakr;[3] while a supporter addressed him as "son of Bakarie Domboyah, born of noble blood, both father and mother."[4] Cabba had evidently entered the Gambia with his father, who was eventually killed in an engagement in the Niani country

1. C.O. 87/55, 1853, 11th July, O'Connor to Palkington. [Newcastle]
2. Gambia Archives, Ex.Co. Minutes, 24th Feb. 1894, Mr. Topp.
3. Gambia Archives, Enclosure No. 189, Letters 1888, Fodey Cabba to Sir S. Rowe, Translated 22nd September 1887.
4. Gambia Archives, Arabic letter of Sasoom Cham to Fodey Cabba, translated by M.A. Savage, Government Interpreter, 9th January 1892.

by Musa Molloh. With the remainder of his father's army he subjugated a district between Kiang and Jarra on the South Bank of the River, fortifying several of the towns there with stockades, but making Datore and Medina inland towns under French jurisdiction, his headquarters.[1] Under the leadership of the two fodeys, a loose confederacy of Muslims was formed in the lower River; and Cabba, in particular, was to give a direction to the war which only Maba had equalled. Like that chief, he was described by officials as a man of remarkably fine appearance, a powerful physique, intelligent with some knowledge of French, and considerable powers of leadership and organisation.[2]

While these men dominated native politics so long was the jihad pursued unmitigatedly to the end of exterminating the Jolas, who were 'pagans', and reconverting back-sliding Muslims among the Mandinkas. It was a war, they believed, ordained by God. Cabba's outlook was typical of that of other jihad leaders. In a message to the Administrator in Bathurst, he wrote: "I beg to say I have nothing to do with groundnuts, as, where I am, I am only a stranger. Ever since I knew myself to be a man, my occupation has been a warrior; and I make it my duty to fight the Soninkes,[3] who profess no religion whatever. If the Soninkes on the north bank of the river had accepted the Mahommedan religion, we could have lived in unity ...."[4] His attitude towards the Colonial Power was equally forthright and uncompromising: "I have nothing to

1. Gambia Archives, Lt.-Col. W.G.Patchett to the Adjutant-General, Horse Guards, 11th November 1890.
2. J.M.Gray, "History", p.452.
3. Soninkes: In Gambian terminology, Soninke did not refer to a tribe, but to nominal Muslims and pagans.
4. J.M. Gray, "History", p.452.

do with whitemen", he wrote in 1887.[1] Cabba and Silla acted with a singleness of purpose which knew no compromise; the extent of their power was such by the end of the nineteenth century that only joint Anglo-French expeditions eventually crushed them.

The narrative of the 'Soninke-Marabout' wars has been told in great detail by Gray in his "History of the Gambia", and all that will be attempted here is to consider the British role as intermediary, and the extent to which mediation between belligerent parties developed into intervention and a growth of military and territorial involvement. It has earlier been suggested that official opinion outside the settlement was not at first opposed to Muslim domination in the Gambia. The Colonial Office had declined to prop up disintegrating states and was prepared to reach a compromise with the de facto governments established by the Muslims when it was expedient to do so. Otherwise, the Governors were instructed to pursue a policy of neutrality. In 1872, Pope Hennessy, the Governor-in-Chief, endorsed Colonial Office thinking by a comparison with the situation in his own colony of Sierra Leone, where contests between Muslims and their opponents had ended in victory for the former and their nearer approach to the colony area. "But so far from being dangerous neighbours or people who despise labour," Hennessy wrote, "they have turned out to be well-disposed to the British Government and most useful to the extension of trade." It was Sir A.E. Kennedy's conciliatory policy towards Muslims in Sierra Leone which, he thought, had produced advantageous results to that colony. "I am therefore disposed to

1. Gambia Archives, Letters 1888, Enclosure No. 189, Fodey Cabba to Governor S. Rowe.

instruct him [the Administrator of the Gambia] to maintain a strict neutrality ... to cultivate friendly relations with the Mohammedans as with the pagans."[1] But attempts at mediation in the Gambia were to lead to involvement, and to the extension of British territory and influence.

The role of the British Administrator of the Gambia as intermediary between the belligerents was a position into which he was raised, both by warring parties themselves, and by third parties which entered the Gambia from outside the territory in order to bring peace between their allies and those with whom they were at war. Thus the Administrator became the recipient of numerous letters in Arabic from a large number of rulers from the interior, making the African Arabic translator one of the most important junior officers in the Civil Service. As early as 1865, a deputation of pagan Jolas and their opponents, Muslim Mandinkas of Vintang Creek area on the South Bank, had requested acting-Governor Primet to arrange peace and draw up a treaty between them.[2]

Twenty years later, the war of extermination in the South Bank and the struggle for domination among the Muslim rulers of the North Bank were still

1. C.O. 87/102, 1872, vol.1. 2nd Sept., Pope Hennessy to Lord Kimberley.
2. C.O. 87/82, 1865, vol.1. 14th Sept. Jolas and others to C.Beresford Primet; C.O. 87/55, 1853, 12th Aug., 3rd Sept. O'Connor to Palkington. [Newcastle] In 1853, Governor O'Connor had meditated between the king of Barra and one of his chiefs; and the people of Gunjur and Brufut had appealed to him to bring peace to Combo.

being pursued. To intervene among the rival reformers the Muslim ruler of the theocratic state of Futa Toro, Abdoul Boobacare, entered Baddibu in 1886 "to bring Beram Ceesay [one of Mahmoud n'Dare Bah's lieutenants] and Said Mattee [Maba's son] into a peaceful pursuit." While he was on this mission, Abdoul Boobacare appealed to the Administrator in Bathurst, I.J.S. Hay, to participate in the negotiations. "If the Governor does not come Baddibu will spoil .... [that place being] the chief seat of Bathurst traders ...."[1] The invitation was accepted; and, through British intervention, a temporary peace was established in February 1887. Beram Ceesay's lordship over the towns he held was recognized, while Said Mattee, as overlord, was provided with a subsidy of £100 per annum by the Colonial Government.[2]

In the MacCarthy Island area, over which the Muslim reformers of Baddibu had extended their authority by the 'seventies, the Commandant of that Island found that Liberated Africans there had assumed the role of intermediary between the king of Cattabar and his Muslim opponents. But far from supporting official policy, they had, on their own initiative, adopted an independent line (as indeed they had done in Maba's Baddibu of the 'sixties) under the leadership of their local Wesleyan Minister, the Rev. York Clement. For the difficulty of all Africans as long as the wars lasted was emotional involvement in all the issues raised by the changes that were taking place in all the states. Neutrality towards the belligerents was therefore not only difficult for them, but meaningless. In order to obviate involvement

1. C.O. 87/127, 1886, vol.1. Arabic letter translated 6th Feb., Abdoul Boobacare to the Administrator in Bathurst.
2. J. Gray, "History", pp.462, 463.

in the wars, (MacCarthy Island being defenceless after 1866 except for an untrained militia force of "old men"),[1] Mr. Tanner, the Manager, had forbidden Muslims and 'Soninkes' from the mainland from entering the Island. This was accepted by the inhabitants as a wise and cautious policy until it was applied to the fugitive king of Cattabar in 1872.

That Tanner refused political asylum to the king, his wives and retinue, and deported them to an uninhabited island a mile away - Papyong island - gave cause for great concern. Representations were made by Clement and his 'committee' against an act which was "equal to ... murder ...", the king of Catabar being the rightful owner of MacCarthy.[2] And in defiance of instructions laid down by the Manager, they visited the king at Papyong with a view to bringing him back to MacCarthy Island. The outcome of this incident was the arrest of the Wesleyan Minister, York Clement, and of the leader of the African trading community there, H.G. Dodgin.[3] The king of Catabar continued his flight beyond the upper Gambia into Bundoo to seek new allies.[4] But a treaty between Mahmoud n'Dare Bah and the colonial Government in 1873, gave official recognition to the Muslim chieftain as effective ruler of Catabar and surrounding territories; and for the security of British traders in Bah's domains, he was offered a stipend of £110 per annum.[5] When,

1. C.O. 87/96, 1870, vol.1. 23rd Feb., Capt. Niven, Superintendent of Police, to Major Bravo, Administrator.
2. C.O. 87/102, 1872, vol.2. 19th April, Petition of Y.F.Clement & other inhabitants to Mr. B.Tanner, Manager MacCarthy Island.
3. C.O. 87/102, 1872, vol.1. 21st April, B.Tanner to H.Fowler, acting Administrator.
4. C.O. 87/102, 1872, vol.1. 26th April, Tanner to Fowler.
5. C.O. 87/105, 1873, vol.2. August Treaty between H.M.Cooper and Mahmoud n'Dare Bah; see also chapter III of thesis.

however, political control in Baddibu was lost to Said Mattee, the treaty of 1887 deprived Mahmoud n'Dare Bah of £100 of his stipend.

For attitudes towards the Muslims were now less rigid than they had been, to a large extent being dictated by expediency. Indeed the 1873 treaty must be regarded as a decisive approach towards Muslim warriors from whom the War Office now looked for recruits to fight the Ashantee war. But Bah himself was at war with the king of Sine, and had not the authority to recommend the depletion of his forces for this purpose to his lieutenants. Liberated Africans, however, had demonstrated their own preference for the traditional ruler in their area who had always been faithful to treaty commitments with the British; and while they had given support to Maba in the 'sixties, they had shifted their ground under his successor, because of relationships long established with the native authority and peoples of Catabar state.

The Clement case demonstrated the vigour of urbanised Africans in the Settlement; whether in the colony or in out-stations, they involved themselves in local politics. Indeed, while this element remained in the River states and continued to pursue the role of intermediary between the belligerents and the Government in St. Mary's, it was not possible for that Government to maintain its neutrality. Clement and his congregation did not only involve the local Government in the incident of 1872, but also the church, and very nearly the British Government itself. It was rumoured that some of the Minister's friends had laid the case before a member of the House of Commons

with a view to some public action being taken in the matter, and that legal proceedings against Mr. Tanner were also contemplated.[1]

But it was not like Benjamin Tregaskis to allow the damage done to the prestige of the church to pass unnoticed.[2] As a result of his representation to the colonial Government, the Governor-in-Chief reprimanded Tanner and instructed him to make an official apology to Clement. At the same time, he requested the Administrator in Bathurst to "draw the attention of the missionaries of every denomination, in a friendly way, ... to the inconvenience of their becoming leaders of opposition to government authorities, especially in remote stations where a public servant has sometimes little assistance in dealing with the difficulties that arise." But urbanised African traders in native states were not yet prepared to support Government policy if it was not in their interest to do so; neither could they avoid involvement in the politics of those states.

As hostilities approached nearer the colony area, the colonial Government had to provide for the defence and protection of British territory and British subjects; it could not afford to remain neutral. For Fodey Silla and Fodey Cabba were determined to subdue or destroy the Jolas of Foni, a province which lay adjacent to Foreign Combo and produced excellent wax for the export market. The Muslims were not unaware of their economic importance to the settlement, but their trade in intoxicating liquors, of which they were the producers, was as offensive as their animism. And while the Jolas remained

1. C.O. 87/102, 1872, vol.1. 14th Oct., P.Hennessy to Lord Kimberley.
2. C.O. 87/102, 1872, vol.1. 17th August, B.M.Tregaskis to the Administrator.

invincible, they provided the justification for the jihad in the Gambia. But constant raids into Foni were to have repercussions in Combo; and gradually Government policy changed from mediation to intervention, since the annihilation of an industrious tribe on the frontier of British territory was itself a threat to British subjects there. Besides, slave-raiding was a concomitant of the jihad for it served the purpose of breaking up village religion and dispersing tribal groups to the end that Islam became an integrative factor when slaves settled under their new masters.[1] British policy after Abolition knew no compromise with any form of slave-raiding; military involvement with Silla and Cabba was to be sanctioned by Colonial Office on this score.

Until the 'seventies, the situation even in this region looked hopeful, for by its mediation, the colonial Government had encouraged the king of Combo to sign treaties with the Muslims. Though such treaties reduced bloodshed, they gradually handed over all lands in Foreign Combo to the Muslims; and Silla as overlord was offered an annual stipend from the Government for the protection of British subjects in his domains. This was in 1873 when Captain Cooper, the acting Administrator, made an expedition to Gunjur in H.M.G. "Merlin" and signed a treaty with Muslim clerics there by which the colonial Government agreed "to respect in every way the territory held by the Marabouts, and ... not in any way [to] interfere with their laws, customs, or proceedings amongst themselves, but only as regards British subjects ...."

1. Trimingham, "Islam in West Africa", pp.29 & 142. This was very much the picture among the Fulani of Northern Nigeria.

A stipend of £50 per annum was offered to the chief of Gunjur in compensation for protection of British subjects entering Foreign Combo "for the purpose of legitimate trade ...." Thus the Government hoped to end the threats of invasion of British Combo; but Muslims insisted their objective was to get "all the ground" from unbelievers, that if God "made war come, they must go to war, if he made peace come, they would have peace ...."[1]

That no provision had been made for the protection of the Jolas (for they were not British subjects) by Cooper's treaty was soon evident, as was the Administrator's indiscretion in having been signatory to a treaty to which Silla himself was not a party. His warriors ignored the agreement of 1873 and continued to harrass and seize the Jolas, while they subjected the Mandinkas of Combo to greater humiliation. In 1874, Sucuta was destroyed, the inhabitants being dispersed into British Combo;[2] and in the following year, Busumballa, the last stronghold of the Mandinka king, fell to the Muslims,[3] and the fugitive king took refuge in Bathurst. It was a situation which required immediate action for it looked as if war in British Combo was inevitable in the event of the war lords pursuing the refugees into British territory. The Administrator, therefore, despatched all available police in the colony to the frontier, having taken precaution to issue a proclamation

1. C.O. 87/104, 1873, vol.1. 26th March, H.M.Cooper to the Governor in Chief, enclosure - Treaty of 24th March 1873.
2. C.O. 87/107, 1874, 26th June, C.H.Kortright to Governor George Berkeley.
3. C.O. 87/108, 1875, 20th June, Cooper to Lord Carnavon.

restricting the movement of armed persons across that frontier, and appealed to the Home Government for assistance.[1] The Muslim threat that no peace would be permanent till unbelievers had been driven out of Combo was thus effectively demonstrated.

In a matter of such importance to the security of British subjects, the Colonial Office did act with promptitude, a warship being "sent for the purpose of affording the Colonial Government moral countenance and support .... [but] not to be brought into action except to secure the safety of the lives and property of British subjects."[2] There was in fact no need for hostile action; for in the Gambia, unlike the Senegal, the jihad was never brought into British territory, which was generally regarded as neutral ground. Even in the midst of hostilities, the mediation of the British Administrator was acceptable to both parties. Muslim supremacy in Foreign Combo was now recognised by a new treaty between Fodey Silla and Tomaney Bojang, the nominal king. It was a humiliating peace for the king; he agreed to have his head shaved and to become a Muslim, and to lay down his arms provided that land was allotted to his people "to cultivate and sit down quiet."[3] Silla accepted the terms, and declared the war against backsliders in Combo at an end.

1. C.O. 87/108, 1875, 20th June, Cooper to Lord Carnavon.
2. C.O. 87/108, 1875, 9th July, Lord Carnavon to H.T.M.Cooper.
3. C.O. 87/108, 1875, 29th Sept., Treaty Agreement between Tomaney Bojang and Fodey Silla.

In Foni, in Kiang and Jarra, the jihad was pursued with renewed religious fervour under Silla himself, Fodey Cabba, and lesser warriors, such as one Ibraimah n'Jie, a French subject from Senegal, who established himself in Vintang in the 'eighties and attempted the destruction of Foni.[1] Once the colonial government was convinced that raids into Foni were for the purpose of "catching slaves", Sir Samuel Rowe recommended that some action should be taken "to interfere with the passage of slave caravans through districts neighbouring to, or, in treaty with our possessions."[2] The obvious alliance between the Muslims of the Gambia and those of the Senegal in the 'eighties gave the colonial Government further cause for concern; and policy approached nearer that adopted by the French, across the border, since the mid nineteenth century. In short, the British Government began to understand the objectives of the leaders of the jihad, their devotion to the cause of reform (notwithstanding the evidence of bitter rivalry among the Muslims of Baddibu), and their determination not to lay down arms till their goal had been reached.

In 1886, H.M.S. "Rifleman" was despatched to Bathurst in consequence of an appeal made for reinforcement against "the threatening attitude of the natives on the Senegal bank",[3] which informed opinion believed might lead to a general uprising in both territories. Already there was interchange of Muslim leaders and troops between Senegal and Gambia. From Baddibu, Mamadou Seydou, a disciple of Fodey Silla, had entered Futa Toro and collected an army

1. C.O. 87/125, 1885, vol.2. 20th May, W.H.Savage to the Administrator.
2. C.O. 87/125, 1885, vol.2. 13th August, Governor Rowe to Sir Fred Stanley.
3. C.O. 87/127, 1886, vol.1. 27th April, Rowe to Earl Granville.

of 12,000 men with which he marched against the fortified French post of Bakel in the upper Senegal.[1] What disturbed the Government of St. Mary's was that Seydou was reported to be carrying on active correspondence with the two Fodeys in their territory, and recruiting Serahulis and Touculors for their armies. As E. Allegre, a local Mulatto merchant, put it:- "If the element which is now forming this party [the Muslim alliance], were purely local and be composed of our Mandingo tribes there would not be ... much to apprehend ... but the fact that strikes me the most and which I believe is quite new is that Foreigners coming from the interior and from agitated countries are being joined to that element ...."[2] Such information, submitted by a local personage in close touch with public opinion on both sides of the border, was immediately accepted by Governor and Council as coming from a reliable source; and on the strength of it the Government appealed for protection.

The French, on their part, acted decisively; within a few months of the jihad being preached again in their settlement Mamadou Seydou was arrested by their forces and ordered to be deported to the Gaboon.[3] Their presence in the vicinity of the Gambia was always an important factor in counteracting the growth of the influence of the Muslim 'confederacy'. By a policy of political alliances with African chiefs - the king of Sine, Mahmoud n'Dare Bah, Musa Molloh - they succeeded in reducing Muslim supremacy as a political power in their territory. Thus the struggle at the end of the nineteenth century had

1. C.O. 87/127, 1886, vol.1. 14th April, E.Pellegrin,Consul for France, to I.S.Hay.
2. C.O. 87/127, 1886, vol.1. 16th April, E.Allegre to I.S.Hay.
3. C.O. 87/128, 1886, vol.2. 20th May, I.S.Hay to S.Rowe.

assumed international proportions when French troops, in providing aid to allies, entered states like Baddibu in violation of the treaties of Versailles and Paris which had guaranteed the Gambia waterway to Britain.[1] In the upper River, too, the French had watched events with growing anxiety, and had made an alliance with Musa Molloh, by which they assisted him to establish his authority as head of a confederacy of Fula chiefs. Land-hungry, with numerous herds and people, the Fulas, under Musa's father, had entered the Gambia in the mid nineteenth century, and had acquired extensive tracts of land by driving out the natives of Carboo. Now Musa Molloh was prepared to make alliances with any ruler who would recognise his authority over Fehrdou or Fulladu, which bordered on Kiang and Jarra, countries under the control of Fodey Cabba and of his father before him. Molloh had also decided to champion the lost cause of the traditional rulers in the upper River, and thus to engage in battle with Fodey Cabba, not only for political supremacy in the South Bank, but also for economic advantages.[2] Nor was the struggle which ensued of less interest to the French than that of Baddibu, since the extension of French jurisdiction in the Casamance involved the subjugation of interior tribes there; and Musa Molloh's kingdom lay on both sides of the Anglo-French boundary.

External pressures and the deterioration of good relations with rulers with whom peace treaties had been signed necessitated some adjustment to the

1. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 6th May, Colonial Office Minute, A.W.L.H. to R.Meade.
2. C.O. 87/129, 1886, vol.3. 23rd October, E.A.M.Smith to Administrator, G.T.Carter. The Manager of MacCarthy Island reported that the "capacity of the country [Fehrdoo] for trading purposes is only second to Baddiboo, when Baddiboo was in a tranquil condition ...."

British policy of mediation and neutrality. When Said Mattee broke the peace of 1887 by attacking the king of Sine, he very nearly suffered the fate of his father. His army was routed by the French at a place called Koomboof, and he was pursued into Baddibu and beyond it to the borders of Barra. From there Mattee crossed the River into Bathurst and sought protection from Sir Samuel Rowe who was in the colony at the time. With him swarmed a large body of Muslims, all of whom now sought British protection, for fortunes had been reversed.[1] That this chief had long been ill at ease with his French neighbours had been evident in his appeal to the British and French in 1884 to delimit the boundary, and show him "what part they had in Saloum ground", as he did not wish "to have anything to do with the French government". His father had been "a good friend of the British government", he said, and it was his wish not to violate British territory or offend that government.[2]

For the moment, however, the British remained indecisive about their role in the war beyond the protection of British subjects, and the refusal to surrender Said Mattee to the French Commandant, who was reminded that he was making war on chiefs in friendly alliance with the British Government.[3] Governor Rowe, having accepted the chief's unconditional surrender, kept him in Bathurst as a political prisoner till provision was made for his location in British Combo. This was a far-reaching step, when Muslim warriors were

1. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 6th May, Bathurst - Reuter's Telegrams.
2. C.O. 87/122, 1884, vol.1. 15th July, Said Mattee Bah to the Administrator Moloney.
3. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 6th June, R.L.A. to R.Meade.

recognised as British protected persons; thus the British had been forced to a policy involvement which was to provide the solution to the menace of the Fodeys in the South Bank.

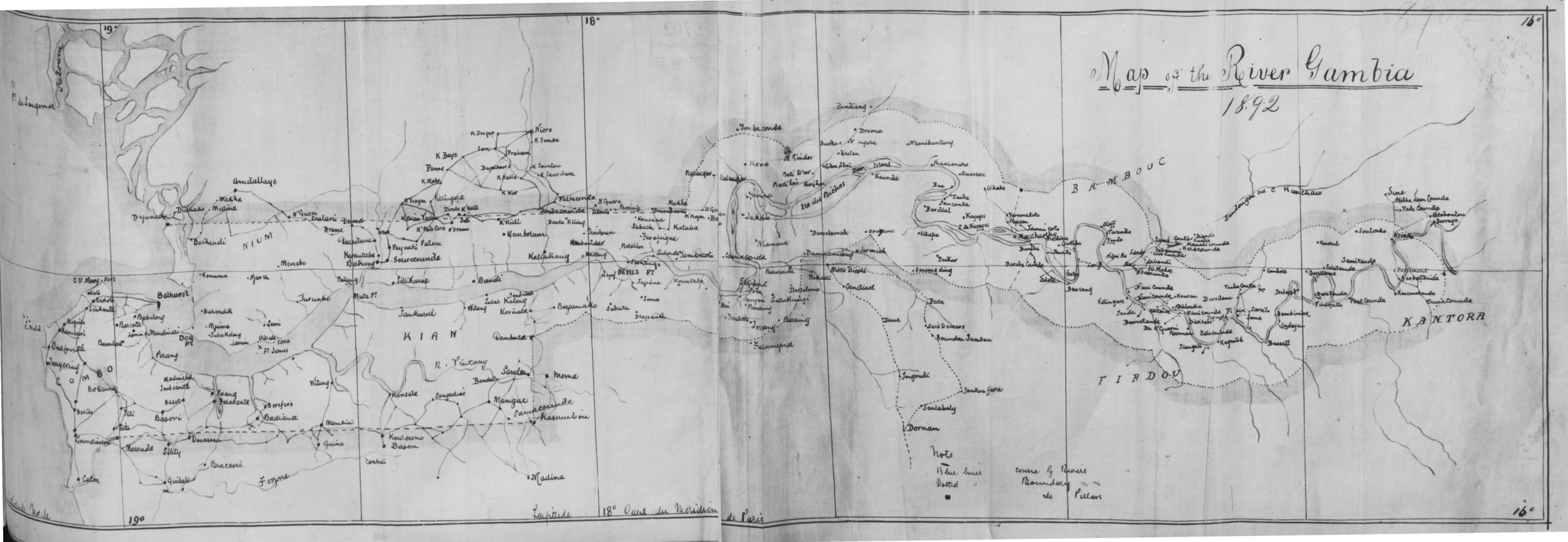
Fodey Silla, like other jihad leaders, had shown no desire to fall under French rule. "I beg that you do not put me into the hands of the French ... for I have no love for them ....", he wrote to the British Administrator in 1890.[1] And the following year, he complained that his towns were rebelling against his rule and deserting him. The people of Sucuta and Brefet, for example, had refused to pay him custom and had offered their towns to the British.[2] The jihad was wearing itself out; it was not only the Jolas who were tormented by it but ordinary Muslims longed to get back to normality. But their leaders "had no experience of a Muslim state, ... [only] an idealistic model gained from reading law books",[3] which they were unable to reproduce. Inspite of their short-comings as administrators, Silla and Cabba were not prepared to cede territories over which they had established their influence. The former was offered a pension of £100 per annum if he would reside in Bathurst and cede the whole of Foreign Combo to the British, but he replied tersely that "a bird in the bush is happier than a bird in a golden cage."[4] But the new Governor, R.B. Llewelyn, under the impetus of disgruntled merchants,[5] and influenced by the international agreements signed at Berlin and

1. Gambia Archives, Enclosure No. 5, Aborigines No. 33, Fodey Silla to G.T. Carter, translated 19th Dec., 1890.
2. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 3rd June, R.B.Llewelyn to Lord Knutsford.
3. Trimingham,"Islam in West Africa", p.143.
4. C.O. 87/144, 1893, vol.2. 18th Dec., R.B.Llewelyn to Lord Ripon.
5. Merchants in Bathurst were enraged "at the apathy of the English Government in allowing such acts to be done by a Chief [Fodey Silla] who gets a subsidy from the Government," C.O. 87/144, 1893, vol.2. 18th Dec., R.B.Llewelyn to Lord Ripon.

Brussels in 1885 and 1890[1] respectively, was determined to extend British influence in the Gambia by effective occupation.

He agitated for the removal of slave dealers and marauders from British territory, in conformity "with the advance movement now taking place in West Africa."[2] It was therefore in this context that the destruction of Fodey Silla and Fodey Cabba was planned by the British Government. With French cooperation, Silla was captured in the Casamance in 1894 and deported to St. Louis, where he died; while Cabba was shot in his stronghold of Medina in 1901. Thus the jihad in the Gambia came dramatically to a close.

1. The Colonial Powers at these Conferences agreed that they had a 'dual mandate' in Africa: to stop the slave trade and replace it by the benefits of European civilisation, and to make the trade and resources of Africa available to the rest of the world. Such objectives could only be achieved by effective occupation of Africa.
2. C.O. 87/144, 1893, vol.2. 18th Dec., Llewelyn to Ripon.


Map of the River Gambia
1892
19°
18°
16°
13°
Pte du Sangomar
Salum
Amdallaye
Wakka
Medina
Dymnah
Didikake
N'Gueri
Toutari
Brumé
Barrendi
NIUN
Mencho
Bathurst
C.St. Mary Fort
Konuma
Njarth
Turumbo
Mutts Pt
Tankural
KIAN
Jambanto
Bandi
Jillikunke
Kalong
Kerinala
Bayanumbo
Subutu
Beaseith
Witang
Jondatan
Tubakolong
Kamalo
Bakendik
Myaima
Jubakolong
Sami
Old Jara
Ft James
Barrokunda
Babadong
Mandinaki
DOG Pt
Perang
Madinaka
Soutsenta
Basse
Basori
Titi
Bita
Yeandimar
Bissilo
Birkama
Kombo
Dankunku
Bonthurst
Bintang
Kambiri
Bakau
C.St Mary
Foang
Faraban Sanda
Berefore
Badiana
Dwessa
Sility
Macunda
Braceré
Guibata
Caton
Foyme
Witang
Mambini
Guine
Kansala
Sangadiar
Kousauno
Basen
Tendali
Bandali
Saridu
Mena
Mangiae
Saridcounda
Kasumbon
Madina
R. Pintang
Latitude
18° Ouest du Méridien de Paris
Yombaconde
Kona
M'Bindor
Kati D'or
Kaitei
Kaifai
Ile des Pecheurs
Patangor
Kiang
Ile Male
Mamona
Dumbacontang
Jarmick
Nitro Diopki
Fenseng ding
Packar
Canticiel
Pata
Doue
Sara Dewaro
Bounder Jambour
Jongendi
Jankon Sara
Soulabaly
Dornan
Elephant Isla
Bai
Jeogen
Batambang
Darfalama
Satambang
Tenang
Jeogang
Jeogang
Kamaya
Bantiang
Drema
Burkou
Vingura
Kenibantang
Keuten
Gambia
Island
Kaunda
Mamimaro
Ouarou
Bue
Toubacounda
Bardial
Kayages
Ile de Kayages
Cikaba
Macharel
Bantaba
Barraba Counda
Bantang
Jeffe
Toronka
Toubacounda
Kiang the
Landy
Jalandi
Mt Makay
Bobbounda
Bantang
Villingara
Tenda
Bamtenda
Bin N'Guyon
Kasman
Pakacounda
Kayabit
Bassell
Sangale
Sami Counda
Kewan
Mandi Counda
Kewcounda
Kewcounda
Tenda Counda
Pt
Darrilama
Pt
Jain
Sarrelo
Jame
Bambinda
Indegen
Dongtome
Semitenda
Jalatenda
Bantenda
Pindingalo
Pont Counda
Parrimont
Kerbetenda
Kewcounda
Counda Counda
Stone
Notre dem Counda
Yade Counda
Kebetenda
Barrage
Koiak
Soutonko
Kandal
Sami Counda
Kewcounda
Kewcounda
Diarra
Manadi Counda
Kewcounda
Jalandi
Kewcounda
Combole
Intagal
Bantenda
Pindingalo
Pont Counda
Kewcounda
Counda Counda
BAMBOUC
KANTORA
TIRDOU
Sandiengal ou C Kimichau
Note
Blue lines
Dotted
course of Rivers
Boundary
do
Pillars

CHAPTER IX

THE RESOLUTION OF A DILEMMA - A PROTECTORATE CREATED. 1887-1901.

By the intervention of British forces against the Muslim confederacy on the South Bank of the River Gambia in the late nineteenth century, the policy of neutrality in native politics was considered to have failed. For, by the late nineteenth century, the compelling factor in West African policy was fierce rivalry among European Powers for colonies in that region. So that punitive expeditions against Muslims became the preliminaries to the extension of British jurisdiction over the banks of the Gambia to "checkmate" the French. In the newly appointed Governor of the settlement, Mr. R.B. Llewelyn, the Colonial Office had one of its most devoted advocates of Protectorate government. To him, the creation of a British protectorate in the Gambia was the only solution to the dilemma which had faced all administrators since the foundation of the settlement. It was therefore during the nine years of his administration that the British Government established a working political unit in the River states controlled by the central Government in Bathurst. Though this was only achieved through the advice and support of the Executive and Legislative Councils of the territory, and by the co-operation of mediating groups in the River states, such as influential merchants and African traders, the Governor was ahead of public opinion on this issue. He it was who had a clear vision of a working protectorate, towards which he steered Government and opinion.

Thirty years earlier, however, Governor d'Arcy had been the first to advocate the destruction of Muslim power in the Gambia, and the creation of a British protectorate as an alternative to continuous warfare in the vicinity of British territory. In d'Arcy's view, it was expedient that the British should safe-guard their commercial interests in the River by accepting the "numerous applications requesting permission to allow the Union Jack to be hoisted in several towns in Baddibu", and elsewhere in the River. Such a government as he proposed, could be established "without a shot being fired", and within two months, he believed, a protectorate system could be easily set up as far up as MacCarthy Island.[1]

In the 'sixties, the overriding interest in British settlements was the increase of trade; and in the Gambia, apart from fostering groundnut cultivation in the fertile districts of Baddibu and Saloum, d'Arcy and British merchants there hoped for an abundant supply of cotton (a commodity in great demand during the American Civil War) "if the lives of the farmers and the results of their industry were secured to them."[2] The Duke of Newcastle, however, was not prepared to consider mere commercial interests as indication for declaring protectorates, especially when British merchants in the Niger Delta region were conducting profitable businesses without so much as a formal government, apart from that exercised by a British consul. The Secretary of State therefore replied firmly that "the Governor's scheme of Protectorate cannot be sanctioned."[3]

1. C.O. 87/74, 24th October, 1862, Governor d'Arcy to the Duke of Newcastle.
2. Ibid.
3. C.O. 87/74, 1862, 17th November, Colonial Office Minute by Newcastle.

Apart from the confused state of affairs in Baddibu in the 'sixties, events in the Ceded Mile during the wars would seem to have called for the extension of British jurisdiction over this area, at least, with a view to isolating it from Muslim invasion. This might have been achieved but for the ancient institution of domestic slavery which existed in all native states and presented one of the major obstacles to the declaration of a protectorate.[1] As anxious for a protectorate were British African traders with factories in Baddibu. Inspite of their apparent satisfaction with Maba's regime, the possibility of the continuation of hostilities, caused them to petition the Governor in 1864 for the creation of a British protectorate over hamlets by "the waterside" (meaning on the very banks of the River) which they would build away from the interior towns of the natives.[2] But it was not Governor d'Arcy's plan to create segregated zones in the River for such traders, fearing this would only provide them with better opportunities for participating in the trans-continental slave trade.

While there was no agreement between Governor and people on the need for, or, the nature of, a protectorate in the Gambia, it was not likely that a strong case could be put up to the Colonial Office. Even members of the Legislative Council were not enthusiastic about the Governor's own recommendations, criticising projects which involved an impoverished colony in unnecessary expenditure.[3] Territorial expansion was generally unpopular with

1. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 28th Sept., d'Arcy to Carnarvon.
2. C.O. 87/80, 1864, vol.2. 20th December, Traders' Petition to d'Arcy.
3. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 27th May, Legislative Council Minutes.

British merchants in the 'sixties; and even humanitarian attempts at locating Liberated Africans and refugees in Barrow Town in British Combo, and in Fitzgerald Town in the Ceded Mile were resented by them. They were firmly of the opinion that the revenues of the colony did not warrant the expenditure that would be incurred in taking actual possession of the Ceded Mile with a Manager and twenty policemen as d'Arcy had proposed. Thomas Brown, as always, was suspected of being at the bottom of opposition;[1] but it was to be expected that merchants who had resisted taxation for years would be unwilling to provide additional funds for the maintenance or protection of native tribes. All they wanted was to secure commercial interests by stationing a gun-boat and a detachment of troops in the River to coerce and punish native rulers who dared to oppose those interests. Though a Manager for the Ceded Mile was appointed during Admiral Patey's administration, when the revenues of the settlement improved,[2] his authority was limited to the British towns in the area, native towns continuing to be governed under native law or Islamic law.[3]

It was not till the 'eighties then that serious discussion on the declaration of a protectorate in the Gambia was entertained by the Colonial

1. C.O. 87/79, 1864, 26th January, d'Arcy to Duke of Newcastle.
   C.O. 87/79, 1864, 22nd January, Merchants' Memorial to NEWCASTLE;
   C.O. 87/80, 1864, 22nd August, d'Arcy to Newcastle.
2. C.O. 87/91, 1869, 5th April, Admiral Patey to Sir A.E.Kennedy.
3. C.O. 87/85, 1866, vol.2. 19th September, Governor Sam Blackall to the Carnavon. Castle.

Office, as a direct result of the complete collapse of traditional government in the Mandinka states, and of the threat of French occupation of Baddibu and Foreign Combo. By this period, the situation in the states had drifted into general chaos; for, in practice, British neutrality meant that the Government was neither willing to undertake the responsibility of establishing peace and order, nor would it permit the new rulers to do this in their own way. Indeed, the traditional rulers hoped that the longer they resisted Muslim incursions, the greater the possibility of receiving aid from the colonial Government with whom they were in treaty relation. The result was, that while the struggle remained indecisive, so long was the question of a protectorate shelved.

Meanwhile, British African traders were engaged in propaganda in those native states which were likely to take their counsel, their objective being to persuade the rulers of such states to take the initiative by offering their territories to the British and thus to conclude the wars. It was no doubt one such trader who wrote a very rudimentary letter to the Queen on behalf of Chief Beram Ceesay in 1880:- "My great opinion," he began, "is to have consolt with your Governor of Bathurst to have agreement between I and people to be under English subject." It concluded very simply: "I shall thank your Royal Highness to receive an answer."[1] It seemed almost a ludicrous letter in 1880, but by 1887, when the Baddibu civil war had developed into an international border dispute between Britain and France, it was beginning to be important to take offers of territory seriously.

1. C.O. 87/116, 1880, vol.2. 12th Sept., Beram Ceesay to H.M. the Queen.

It was in this period of the 1880s when the British Government was contemplating decisive action against French encroachment in the Gambia that a nucleus of Bathurst traders with roots in native states like Jarra on the South Bank were working their hardest as self-appointed mediators (though it is not impossible that they might have been working under explicit directions of a Liberated African committee in Bathurst). In November 1885, one Benjamin Bah, a trader and cutter-owner of Jarra origin, but domiciled in Bathurst, approached the Administrator, C.A. Moloney, on behalf of the king, chiefs and people of Jarra, praying him to take the whole kingdom of Jarra under British protection,[1] although it was a state which had been dismembered by Fodey Cabba and Musa Molloh. In December, a further effort was made to cede that state without success, the Secretary of State instructing the Governor-in-Chief "to cause the king and chiefs of Jarra to be informed that Her Majesty is not prepared to accept their offer."[2] But the Administrator saw advantages to be derived from the possession of an area fourteen miles deep by twenty miles long in the middle River.[3]

So did African members of the Legislative Council, men like J.D.Richards and S.J.Forster whose role in the commercial community and in the Government of the colony enabled them to bring pressure to bear on those who formulated policy. For example, the presence of the Governor-in-Chief in Bathurst in 1887 provided them with the opportunity to resume the protectorate issue with

1. C.O. 87/126, 1885, vol.3. 2nd Nov., Benjamin Bah to C.A.Moloney, enclosed in despatch of 7th Nov., Moloney to Sir F.A.Stanley.
2. C.O. 87/126, 1885, vol.3. 4th January, Stanley to Rowe.
3. C.O. 87/126, 1885, vol.3. 5th Dec., Moloney to Sir Samuel Rowe.

officials at high level. Having led a welcoming deputation of prominent African citizens to Sir Samuel Rowe soon after his arrival in their midst, Richards followed this up by submitting a letter to the Governor which set out the Jarra problem and posed a solution for it.

Liberated African interest in that state was almost purely economic; their opposition to Fodey Cabba intensified in proportion as that ruler appeared to destroy the prosperity that might otherwise have been expected by its inhabitants, and by those who were cultivators, or traders there like themselves. Indeed to them, Jarra was potentially productive, strategically situated at the crossroads to the interior, with "facilities of access to the upland countries beyond, ... an easy resort from various points to the interior, where natives reach the sea-border [the River bank] to settle and cultivate groundnuts, and enabled to return home within short periods without the risk and inconvenience of crossing and recrossing the River, and also with lesser risk of being plundered during their short journey from Jarra, which lasts only a day or two ...."[1] African entrepreneurs had the advantage of knowing the River states thoroughly, for even when prosperity enabled some of them to direct their businesses from Bathurst, all of them had learnt the business the hard way, as groundnut-buyers for European merchants in those states. Their analyses of River situations at this crucial time, therefore, came to be regarded with some importance by Governors like Samuel Rowe.

1. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 1st June, J.D.Richards to Samuel Rowe.

1887 was in fact an auspicious moment to press for a use of force against Cabba in order to secure for Britain "the most peaceful of the Mandingo states," as Richards put it in his letter, "while the event at Baddibu is still fresh."[1] It was, however, the diplomatic situation created in that region by the pursuit of Said Mattee by French forces down to the very banks of the Gambia which was to mark a turning-point in colonial policy in that colony; for the Colonial Office was quite likely to remain unmoved by letters and petitions emanating from African communities agitating for the declaration of a British protectorate.

Under the disturbing circumstances of 1887, Mr. Hemming was not slow to deduce the implications of French activities on the North Bank, being fully aware of the terms of the Brussels Agreement of two years before with its emphasis on effective occupation as against ill-defined spheres of influence in the interior of Africa. "If the French are allowed to occupy Baddibu," he warned Mr. Meade, "they will divert the trade of the Gambia and ruin our Settlement. And we may expect that they play the same game on the South of the River and occupy Fogni. We ought to checkmate them at once;" and he suggested that Governor Rowe should be instructed by telegraph to proclaim a British protectorate over both banks of the River for one mile inland, as far up as MacCarthy Island, while the Foreign Office should at once make representation to the French Government.[2]

British officials on the spot were even more disturbed by reports of French encroachment in Baddibu. Indeed when Rowe heard that the French flag

1. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 1st June, Richards to Rowe.
2. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 6th May, C.O. Minute, Hemming to Meade.

had been hoisted in Jirong (or Juronko), situated a short distance north of the Ceded Mile, he telegraphed Home for instructions to hoist the British flag at all landing places willing to accept it, and to ask for "the withdrawal of the French flag from every place within gunshot of highwater on the bank of the River ... pending negotiations."[1] Thus began a feverish scramble for territory between the French and the British in this part of West Africa, with the French generally setting the pace, since the British were only prepared to hasten to annexation in order to obstruct French expansion. Indeed, in those areas where the French threat was minimal, the British Government pursued its old policy of inactivity, for protection involved expense. On the North Bank, for example, immediate action was necessary to settle the boundary issue, if only to assert British rights over a waterway recognised by international treaties as British.

Acting on instructions from Home, by which treaties were to be made with riverain chiefs and the British flag hoisted at all landing places,[2] Sir Samuel Rowe embarked on a systematic flag-hoisting mission along the River, starting at Misera on the Atlantic Coast and regarded as the most northerly town in Barra kingdom.[3] This move immediately raised the question of the

1. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 24th May, Rowe to Lord Knutsford.
2. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 14th April, letter and 15th July telegram, Knutsford to Rowe.
3. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 18th August, C.O. Minutes, Hemming to Meade.

Anglo-French boundary, for occupation in this part had often been so haphazard, that it was uncertain what the French in Senegal regarded as their southern boundary.[1] From Misera, Rowe had planned an expedition eastwards, but his course was deflected southwards by a report that the French Army was on its way to Cape Bald on the coast of Foreign Combo. To forestall them, Rowe was now instructed to make treaties with the chiefs of that district and with those of Fogni,[2] particularly as there appeared to be no slavery difficulties among the Jolas, "and it would be a profitable country to acquire."[3] The thorny problem of protection for the Jolas against the ravages of Cabba and Silla now had to be resolved. In September 1887, Governor Rowe signed treaties of friendship and commerce with fourteen chiefs of Fogni by which they promised never to cede any part of their territory to any other Power "or enter into any agreement, treaty or arrangement with any Foreign government except through, and with the consent of, the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of England."[4] Similar treaties were signed subsequently with the chiefs of Kiang and Jarra.

While in his official capacity Rowe was prepared to interpret, as accurately as possible, the instructions he received from Home, he did not hesitate to make Colonial Office officials know his private opinion on a mere flag-hoisting and treaty-making policy. "Towards preventing the occupation of the River banks by the French," he wrote in a private letter to

1. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 28th July, R.L.A. to R.Meade.
2. Ibid., A.W.L.H. to R.Meade.
3. C.O. 87/130, 1887, vol.1. 18th August, A.W.L.H. to R.Meade.
4. C.O. 87/131, 1887, vol.2, 15th Sept., Treaty between Governor Rowe & Chiefs of Fogni.

Hemming, "I do not think they are worth the paper they are written on except they will in some way restrain the French from taking advantage of opportunities offered to them ...."[1] Though he did not mention the alternative of creating a British protectorate at an early date, he must have had this in mind. From a practical point of view alone, the prestige of the British flag could hardly be expected to last long "if the districts are pillaged and no punishment meted out to the marauders."[2] The colony itself being wholly dependent on produce cultivated in native states provided a reason for extending British influence over such states, if only to safeguard the revenue.

If the Colonial Office could be moved to see the point of view of the Gambia Government, it could not authorise officials on the spot to take action against French encroachment once the British Government had decided to settle the question of its rights in the Gambia by international negotiation. While reports of French activity on the frontiers of the Gambia were circulating, Sir Samuel Rowe was instructed to suspend all operations for the time being. Little wonder that Hemming was so critical of the British stand, and dissatisfied with the Foreign Office for "delays and neglect" in matters relating to the colonies. "The results are fatal," he complained to Meade, "and this Office is the one that gets blamed."[3] His conclusions on the Gambia situation were realistic, and to a great extent he supported Rowe's opinion that Gambian chiefs could not be expected to prefer "sentimental alliances"

1. C.O. 87/131, 1887, vol.2. 22nd October, Rowe to Hemming.
2. Ibid.
3. C.O. 87/131, 1887, vol.2. 12th November, Hemming to Meade.

with the British, from which they got no advantage, to the active support and protection of another power. Hemming went further and indicated the alternatives open to his Government: It was either to do the "honourable" thing and declare a British protectorate over the whole of the states adjacent to the River; or, it could use the opportunity to resume talks with France about the cession of the Gambia as time had shown that only "an impossible expenditure from Imperial funds" could save the colony from decay.[1] A simpler solution was for the Government to do nothing and allow the Gambia trade to die out altogether!

Financial considerations were always important to the Colonial Office, and though the revenue of that colony had continued to improve during the 'eighties, the Gambia was by no means a prosperous colony at this time. And senior officials at the Colonial Office, such as Meade, were only interested to follow a policy such as had been recommended by Lord Kimberley when he was Secretary of State for the colonies "to take what we consider essential alone and leave the rest to other Powers if they choose to take it ...."[2] In this case, only the River itself and the lands immediately adjacent to it would appear to have been of interest to the British Government. Beyond this, there was something unscrupulous, if not sinister, in Hemming's suggestion that it would be of advantage to Britain if she could "enlarge the Settlement as much as possible beforehand - and so enhance its value for purposes of exchange."[3]

1. C.O. 87/131, 1887, vol.2. 18th November, Hemming to Meade.
2. C.O. 87/134, 1888, vol.3. 29th December, R.Meade to Lord Knutsford.
3. C.O. 87/134, 1888, vol.3. 28th December, Hemming to Meade.

Generally, concern for the wellbeing of the riverain peoples was limited to their sufferings under the harsh rule of the Muslims, and especially as victims of slave-raiders like Fodey Silla and Fodey Cabba.[1] Yet these so-called marauders had large numbers of ardent supporters - men and women - in all parts of the River and in Bathurst itself, to whom they were more like liberators than marauders. If this were not so, it would be difficult to explain the influence and authority exercised by the two Fodeys for half a century. European Powers in West Africa tended to overlook the ill-consequences of their own policies upon indigenous peoples, in particular, the partitioning of territories and its consequent dislocation of societies, which, like the policy of the Fodeys, was largely guided by self-interest.

By an Agreement of the 10th of August 1889, the boundaries of the Gambia were finally delimited, thus preparing the way for the creation of a British protectorate there. The treaty had been signed in Paris by representatives of Britain (E.H. Egerton and A.W.L. Hemming) and of France (A. Nisard and J. Bayol).[2] In November of the same year, the treaty was ratified by the two Governments. The essence of the agreement was that Anglo-French Boundary Commissioners were to be appointed at an early date to mark out the boundary line on the spot, starting from Jinnack Creek on the North Bank and following

1. C.O. 87/131, 1887, vol.2. 18th Nov., Hemming to Meade.
2. C.O. 87/136, 1889, vol.2. Treaty Agreement of 10th Aug. 1889.

the River "at a distance of ten kilometres from [it]", as far east as Yarbutenda, nearly three hundred miles from the estuary. Similarly, on the South Bank, the line was to begin at the mouth of the San Pedro River on the Atlantic coast and likewise follow the Gambia, at a distance of ten kilometres, to Yarbutenda.[1] This done, the British representatives returned to London relieved that they had saved the great waterway and its banks for Britain. Unfortunately, with little consultation with local authorities in the Gambia beforehand, Egerton and Hemming were not to know that a considerable depth of the river bank was covered with mangrove swamp and unfit for cultivation or habitation; that the ten kilometres boundary line would cut across several villages, separating homes from farms, chiefs and alcaides from former subjects. Colonial Powers regarded the partitioning of colonies as a diplomatic affair to be concluded between metropolitan governments in Europe, in consequence of which they created more problems among indigenous peoples than they solved.

Fodey Silla was the first native ruler to object to the presence of the Commissioners in his territory, and chided the British representative, Captain Kenny, for not being straightforward, "saying smooth words and cutting his country in two ...."[2] So disturbed was he that he actually forbade the Commissioners to continue marking out the boundary till he had seen the Governor.[3] It was not irrelevant that he demanded to know how the boundary could have been fixed in London, how the Queen knew the extent of his country,

1. C.O. 87/136, 1889, vol.2. Treaty Agreement of 10th August 1889.
2. Secretariat Archives - Gambia, Confidential Despatch Book 1888-1890, Enclosure No. 2, 15th Dec. 1890, Capt. Kenny R.E. to Governor G.T.Carter.
3. Ibid., Enclosure No. 5, Aborigines No. 33, Fodey Silla at Brekama to G.T.Carter, received 19th Dec., 1890.

and whether she would come to see the spot she had agreed to limit her protection to.[1] Kenny was not accustomed to such "disdainful hauteur" from an African ruler, and recommended that a sufficient escort might be sent with the Commission to demand respect from the chief. Governor Carter, however, tactfully allayed some of Silla's fears by giving assurance that once the boundary was fixed, he would be safe from French interference in his territory.[2] But within another three years, in 1894, British troops routed Silla out of the territory that had been guaranteed to him, and French troops arrested him outside the border and deported him to St. Louis.

Fodey Cabba was equally suspicious of European movements within his domain and refused the Commission admission into any part of it.[3] His concern, too, was with the possible partitioning of the lands under his control; but the French were able to secure his submission.[4] In a sense, Cabba was virtually a protégé of the French, even carrying on an extensive correspondence with the French Commandant at Sejou in the Casamance. There were reports from traders in that area that Cabba and his warriors could get as many guns and ammunition from the French as they required.[5] Certainly he received gifts, as well as medicine for his sick herds of cattle, from the Commandant; and in one letter, at least, the Commandant wished him victory

1. Confidential Despatch Book, 18th Dec., Kenny to Carter.
2. Confidential Despatch Book, ? Dec. 1890, Carter to Lord Knutsford.
3. C.O. 87/139, 1891, vol.1. Telegram to Lord Knutsford.
4. C.O. 87/139, 1891, vol.1. 29th March, Hemming to Meade.
5. Confidential Despatch Book 1888-1890, 1890-1895, 17th March 1892, Major George Madden, Officer Commanding the troops to Governor R.B. Llewelyn.

over his enemies.[1] It was not unlikely that the French hoped Cabba would establish effective control over an extensive area, and thereafter sign treaties of peace and protection with them, in the same way as they had secured Musa Molloh's friendship.

In the transitional period between the signing of the 1889 Agreement and the creation of a protectorate in 1894, it was made very clear to Governor Llewelyn in Bathurst that Jarra and Kiang had remained loyal to Fodey Cabba, notwithstanding Sir Samuel Rowe's flag-hoisting and treaty-making programme of 1887. Indeed, mediators like Benjamin Bah now disclosed that it was only through their perseverance that their people had surrendered territories to Samuel Rowe.[2] Now, Cabba and his supporters determined to make a final effort against British influence in their midst, concentrated on British agents and spies in their towns as targets of oppression. "Now I am so attacked on every side," was Bah's desperate plea to the British Governor from his trading station in Sanding in east Fogni.[3] He had suffered robbery of trade goods and personal effects from two of Cabba's warriors from Datore; and when he complained to Cabba in Medina, he received the reply that he could not interfere till he had seen the French.[4] This was a reference to the agreement Cabba had entered into with the French by which he was not to invade or molest British or French territory.

It was a period in the nineteenth century when the situation in the

1. Confidential Despatch Book, Letters from Commandant of Casamance to Cabba, translated by M.A.Savage, 6th January 1892, 11th January 1892.
2. Confidential Despatch Book, 21st May 1892, Benjamin Bah to R.B.Llewelyn.
3. Ibid.
4. Conf. desp. bk., 25th February 1892. Bah's account taken down by Llewelyn in Bathurst.

River states was made more difficult for urbanised African traders than before. And difficulties were to remain unsolved as long as such traders were attached to two independent authorities in the River - one to whom they paid custom for protection of trade and by whom they were constantly robbed in revenge for being subversive elements in the states, to the extent of serving British interests rather than their own; and the other to whom such traders were legally attached as British subjects. It was in attempting to fulfil these roles in the state of Jarra that in 1892 Lydia Rose and Brimah Samuel, British African traders in Toniataba, got involved with Cabba's warriors. They had agreed to guide the troops of the First West India Regiment to the stockade of Sulyman Suntu, Cabba's warrior chief of Toniataba; and had provided water and grass mats for the wounded soldiers after the attack on the stockade, before they made their own escape down River.[1] But Samuel's "goods, cattle, corn etc. to the value of £200.10.4." did not escape plunder from the Muslims; nor did those of Lydia Rose to the same amount.[2] Yet, neither the Government in Bathurst, nor Fodey Cabba in Medina, would compensate the traders who were caught in a complex River situation of European and Muslim intrigue.

News of the plight of their traders soon reached the merchants of Bathurst. Henry Charles Goddard, the Mulatto son of William Goddard, and, agent for the Bathurst Trading Company, then the largest firm in the settlement, took up the matter with Governor Llewelyn, reminding that the merchants had

1. Conf. desp. bk., Fodey Cabba Papers, 17th March 1892, Major Madden to R.B.Llewelyn.
2. Conf. desp. bk., 25th March 1892, Brimah Samuel to Llewelyn.

put their traders "under the protection of the British Government." It had been the urgent representations of British merchants, and their threat to make "heavy claims on the Government for loss of property,"[1] which had in fact resulted in the expedition against Toniataba. Punitive expeditions, however, proved equally disastrous to traders, for when the troops were commanded to burn down a rebel village, they tended to do the work thoroughly so that factories were at risk of being destroyed too.

Merchants began to identify themselves much more with their traders, sending information to the Governor of their exact locations and the value of goods in their factories in the River whenever a punitive expedition was proposed. Henry Goddard went further; on one occasion he informed the Governor that he had sent his trader at Siecunda (a short distance from Toniataba which was to be destroyed) an ensign and a house flag - "a red flag with white letters B.T.C." - which he was advised to hoist over his store and groundnuts should he hear any firing in the neighbourhood.[2] Governor Llewelyn was obliged to pass on these remarks to the Officer commanding the troops in the River.[3] Such problems made the government of the Gambia a tedious affair.

Llewelyn had never had any doubt in his mind that the final solution to the growing complexities of the River lay in the creation of a British protectorate. But his first objective was to destroy as many of the fortified

1. Conf. desp. bk., 18th & 19th March 1892, H.C.Goddard to R.B.Llewelyn; 20th April 1892, James Topp, Member of Legislative Council to Llewelyn.
2. Conf. desp. bk., 21st April 1892, Goddard to Llewelyn.
3. " " " 26th April 1892, Llewelyn to Colonel Ellis.

Muslim towns - "pest holes" as he described them - as a preliminary to providing opportunities for "the civilization of the people and advancement of the countries."[1] Not that this was some new vision for the Gambia; it had been one of the reasons for the founding of the settlement in the early nineteenth century. Its significance lay in the fact that after eighty years of British administration in a small settlement like the Gambia, the tasks of the Colonial Power had not been fulfilled. Llewelyn was now determined to accelerate development, and he was fortunate to get the sympathy of the Colonial Office. "I am quite prepared to go ahead here," he wrote in a private letter to Hemming in 1893, "... don't keep me here idle." He made it clear that he did not believe the British Government could pursue its traditional policy of remaining "quiet and stationary" any longer. Either the British Government was to advance with the French, or, it would be obliged to retire from the scene.[2] Beyond holding general ideas about policy, Llewelyn was also a planner and a keen administrator. Within a few years of assuming the role of Governor, he had produced a detailed scheme for the administration of a British protectorate that would be efficient, effective and inexpensive.

The Protectorate Ordinance of 1894 provided for the division of the Gambia into districts to be administered by chiefs and alcaides appointed by

1. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 2nd May, Llewelyn to Lord Knutsford.
2. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 12th April, Llewelyn to Hemming.

the Governor in Bathurst, and supervised by Travelling Commissioners. The administrative, executive and magisterial powers of the Commissioners were outlined in the Ordinance. Native courts were to remain an integral part of the new system; and for the time being, domestic slavery was to remain untouched. The traditional, but unsatisfactory institution of native customs was to be reformed at last.

The essence of the new machinery of Government was economy and uniformity without rigidity. It was the flexibility of the new system which was to make its fusion with traditional rule possible and acceptable to the indigenous peoples. Indeed, the comparative ease with which the Protectorate was established was itself indication of acquiescence on the part of those who had to live under it, as it was also evidence of the durable foundations of law and order upon which societies in the River states had been built, and which half a century of bitter warfare had not destroyed. Kings and chiefs had been deposed or killed, but for the most part, the aged alcaides and elders of the villages had survived the revolution. The superstructure had collapsed under Muslim pressures, but the historic foundation of traditional village rule by alcaides, almamys and headmen could not easily breakdown. This simplified the task of the Travelling Commissioners, and provided continuity between the old and the new system of government.

It was a bold policy that Governor Llewelyn embarked upon, even while Fodey Silla and Fodey Cabba were in positions of authority from which they could direct counter operations to the peaceful creation of a protectorate. Not that the protectorate was entirely Llewelyn's idea; his contribution was

to consolidate what Samuel Rowe, and George Carter his predecessor, had begun in the River states. There is little doubt, however, that, as the French Governor of Senegal observed at the time, British policy was distinctly modified under Llewelyn. His predecessors had assured native rulers that the delimitation of the Anglo-French boundary would in no way interfere with their entire jurisdiction over their own states.[1] But because of continuous disturbances which almost became more fierce as the jihad lost momentum and direction Llewelyn's thoughts on a protectorate crystallised; and within a year of taking office he submitted a detailed scheme for the administration of the Gambia hinterland for the consideration of the Colonial Office.

Within the colony itself, the Governor sought the advice of his Councils, which now preferred to see the extension of British jurisdiction to that of Fodey Cabba. Local public opinion was also consulted while he was finding a solution to the Gambia dilemma. For that reason, H.C. Goddard, employer of nearly six hundred traders in the River was on several occasions co-opted as Extraordinary Member to the Executive Council to give officials the benefit of his local experience.[2] It was, for example, in the presence of this Council that the first steps towards creating a protectorate were taken.

The destruction of Toniataba, Cabba's headquarters in Jarra, was immediately followed up by assembling all the chiefs and almamys of Jarra and

1. Microfilm from Archives - Dakar, Senegal - A.O.F. Serie IF. Bobin 5, June 1893, H.Lamothe, Governor of Senegal, to Capt. Morin, French representative on Anglo-French Boundary Commission to locate villages on the North Bank.

2. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 20th May, Llewelyn to Lord Knutsford.

Kiang (districts over which Cabba's influence had extended) in Bathurst in 1892. With no instructions from Home, nor any Ordinance as yet to implement, Llewelyn, however, saw this as a moment to exploit to the British advantage; and in the presence of the Executive Council he informed the chiefs that all the land conquered from Cabba (who had retired to Medina after Toniataba) was now British territory and would be governed as such.[1] The detail of the proposed protectorate machinery was explained to them, after which they were made to show their support of the Governor's policy by swearing on the Koran, and to sign an Agreement in which they pledged themselves "to recognise the authority of the Governor of the Gambia, to whom alone we look for advice and protection ...."[2] The intention was to undermine the authority of all former overlords and to exclude all foreign powers from those districts. For the first time, the chiefs were receiving their insignia of office from a European authority, an authority which now assumed the right to decide all claims to chieftainship. Thus Llewelyn immediately reinstated those chiefs who had been deposed by Cabba, making head chiefs of some who had put up the greatest resistance to him, like the chief of Soma.[3] It was a practical solution perhaps to a difficult situation which required immediate action for re-establishing law and order; but Governor and Council underestimated the tenacity of the tribes.

If the Governor's attitude towards the problems of a British protectorate in the Gambia was sometimes incautious, it was to his credit that he made a

1. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 19th May, Llewelyn to Knutsford.
2. Ibid., 17th May 1892, Agreement signed; interpreted in Mandinka by I.H. Johnson and J.Elliot.
3. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 19th May, Llewelyn to Knutsford.

determined effort to resolve the Gambia dilemma. Circumstances had shown that the answer lay not in subsidizing a number of semi-independent chiefs, nor in stationing troops in the River, but in controlling the very governments of those states. That was Llewelyn's mission. Indeed, his enterprising policy in the interior was a matter for frequent comment by French officials at St. Louis and Nioro in the Senegal who saw it as aggrandisement, a determination to pursue British interests in the Gambia with less scruple and moderation than they were prepared to adopt in defending the interests of their country.[1] In spite of such criticisms, the French admired his system of administration through Travelling Commissioners, by which British influence was to be constantly felt in the states by the presence of these agents in their midst.

The first step "to advance British influence within the protectorate" itself came in January 1893 when Governor Llewelyn, accompanied by the newly appointed Commissioners and an escort of policemen, made an arduous march through the main towns on the North Bank as far up the River as Nianimaru in the vicinity of MacCarthy Island. At each of the twelve principal towns visited, a Proclamation was read in English, Wolof and Mandinka which stated that "the full sovereignty of [the territories] rests in Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Her Heirs and Successors for ever ..."[2] And the Proclamation was then posted on the bantaba,[3] followed by a gun salute, and the hoisting of the British flag. Alcaides who attended these ceremonies were given flags for

1. A.O.F. Serie IF, No. 879, 16th July 1893, H.Lamothe to the Secretary of State in Paris.
2. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 23rd March, Llewelyn to the Marquess of Ripon.
3. bantaba: the largest tree in the centre of a town under which all social gatherings were held.

their own smaller towns. This then was the legal machinery by which the North Bank too came under British control.

It was in this area that the protectorate system was most completely established; for there being no head chiefs or kings in the region, the Governor simply substituted himself as their new king, "and they must obey his orders",[1] he told them. This, he hoped, would not be difficult to obtain under a regime of newly nominated chiefs devoted to the British cause. For most of the former rulers had found themselves on the French side of the boundary, and the 1889 Paris Agreement and an assurance from Governor Lamothe of Senegal in 1892 provided that "the limits of native jurisdiction should be in absolute agreement with the diplomatic frontier."[2]

Not that this arrangement pleased the French or their protégés who were now forbidden to demand customs from the inhabitants on the British side of the boundary, or indeed to exercise any jurisidction over them. The French had illegally extended their influence into the states of Jokadu, Baddibu, Sanjal and Saloum after the flight of Said Mattee from his kingdom in 1887. There they appointed chiefs under their protection to the chiefdoms vacated by Mattee's supporters; and by native law and custom, these new rulers were entitled to the customs of the old. Issues in these border states were going to complicate the task of the Anglo-French boundary commissioners, and affect relations between the French Governor in St. Louis and the British Governor in Bathurst.

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 23rd March, Llewelyn to Ripon.
2. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 8th April, Llewelyn to Ripon.

Meanwhile, Governor Llewelyn had informed all alcaides that they would now be regarded as Government officials, under the supervision of the Governor and his deputy, the Travelling Commissioner. They would still be expected to maintain peace and order in the villages, as they had always done, but they would no longer receive customs directly from traders, as British traders would now pay those customs to the administration in Bathurst in return for trade licenses, which would be submitted to the alcaides by all who entered their towns for trade. Not only customs, but all substantial revenue hitherto collected by native authorities were suddenly to be handed over to the colonial Government, which was to decide what percentage was to be handed back to the alcaides. Ground rents on farms, for example, were to be fixed at an annual rate, and collected by the alcaides, who were only to receive 50% of the total.[1] Llewelyn's aim was to prepare the people for the new regime by which power was to be distributed between native rulers and government officials. He had yet to draft the ordinances which would effect the new changes.

In theory, the proposed changes in their towns did not at first seem radical to the native rulers of the North Bank, for the new administration was not a picture they could not recognise or understand. Even the sudden appearance in their towns of temporary European residents who were neither merchants nor soldiers did not disturb them unduly. Judging by the accounts of the Travelling Commissioners, it would seem that most villages extended warm hospitality to the Governor's deputy whom they felt honoured to accommodate.[2] This was partly because there was apparently nothing sinister

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 23rd March, Llewelyn to Ripon.
2. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 16th June, J.H.Ozanne's Report on the North Bank to R.B.Llewelyn, enclosed in despatch to Ripon, 1st July 1893.

about a whiteman who wandered from one village to another accompanied by a few sergeants and porters, attempting to settle disputes between the traders and the farmers, bringing news from the Governor in Bathurst, and collecting information for him. It was a very different picture from the one across the border, where the Commandant of Nioro travelled through his district accompanied by chiefs, cavalry and infantry who lived on the country; and only those who had the chiefs' favour could approach him during his short stay in a village. The inhabitants of French villages therefore dreaded these official visits, being forbidden direct access to the Commandant by their own chiefs, and tended to look at French administration with fear, and at the British protectorate with longing.[1]

The Gambia protectorate, however, was only satisfactory for the time being, while most River folk were war weary and desired peace to recuperate from the ugly incidents of half a century of violence. The alcaides, for example, were not in a position to know that protectorate administration was an insidious system which in the long run would only make nominal rulers of them, while greater control would pass to the Travelling Commissioners. It would therefore be unfair to blame them for having accepted Llewelyn's far reaching terms (assuming they were correctly translated to them by the African interpreters) with so little criticism and resistance. But the future was to prove that apparent acquiescence in the Llewelyn plan was only a temporary victory for the Governor.

1. A.O.F., Serie 1F, April 1896, Mons. Fargui, French representative on 1896 Anglo-French Boundary Commission, to the Governor-General at St. Louis.

It was the Secretary of State who first raised objection to the terms of the 1893 Proclamation, pointing out to Llewelyn that he had gone beyond instructions. By claiming full sovereignty over newly acquired lands for the British Crown, he had in effect made such districts "ipso facto British territory ... subject to British law, and ... the British Government ... responsible for their protection and for the maintenance within them of peace and order ...."[1] Such responsibility was particularly unattractive to the Colonial Office because it raised the question of domestic slavery, for which the only British solution was immediate abolition. Lord Knutsford's instructions of March 1892 had in fact merely envisaged a declaration of British protection over the people on the river banks whose alcaides were to be informed that "they are no longer to make any payments to chiefs outside the line ...."[2] But Llewelyn knew that a proclamation that carried out these vague ideas would be ineffectual, neither maintaining the status quo, nor replacing it by anything concrete. He was not a man to pursue the policy of temporising till circumstances righted themselves, for there were obvious advantages to be gained by prompt action. Because of the confidence placed in his judgment by officials of the Colonial Office, Llewelyn was able to create the kind of protectorate he believed suited the Gambia situation.

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 3rd May, Ripon to Llewelyn.
2. Ibid., quotation within despatch.

It would have been impracticable and imprudent to attempt to impose the new administration throughout the River states in 1894, the delimitation of the boundary alone was not completed till 1899. In the South Bank the Government had to move cautiously, being fully aware of the deep-rooted opposition in many districts there. This did not, however, mean that that region did not form part of the Protectorate programme, for like the North Bank, it had its own Travelling Commissioner. But though the chiefs of Kiang and Jarra had agreed to surrender the sovereignty of their states to the British Governor in 1892, some of their most important towns remained loyal to Fodey Cabba, whose influence over his supporters in British territory was no less efficacious for being exercised from over the border.

In another category fell the regions to the extreme east and west of the newely created protectorate; these were Barra and Ferhdou, kingdoms ruled by traditional kings - Naranta Sonko and Musa Molloh, respectively. Llewelyn was wise to introduce a degree of diversity in his plan for native states, for, not only could traditional kings not be overlooked, but while no special funds for running protectorate administration existed, it was in the interests of the central Government to utilize, to its own purposes, those political institutions which already existed in the states. For these reasons, Sonko was for the time being left in authority in Barra, though he had agreed to cede it to the British. No Travelling Commissioner traversed his lands, nor was he deprived of his ancient revenues. The only attempt made to bring Barra into some conformity with the North and South Bank districts was to replace

"many vexatious little taxes that have been imposed by the king on persons crossing from Baddibu to the Gambia" by an increase in the king's annual stipend from £83.6.8d. to £110 during his lifetime.[1]

Attitudes towards Musa Molloh were less clearly defined, partly because Fehrdou was an unfamiliar state to British administrators, except perhaps to the Manager of MacCarthy Island, and also because Molloh was still engaged in defending lands wrested by his father from Fodey Cabba's father.[2] And French activity[3] in a kingdom which extended over both sides of the boundary line restrained the British Governor from declaring a protectorate there. Llewelyn had to admit that he could not yet come to terms with the king "for, as a protégé of the French, he is watched and completely under the orders of the French officers stationed at Amdallai where he resides."[4] In any event, the boundary line across Fehrdou was not marked out till 1899; and the country abounded in domestic slaves over whom Molloh would accept no compromise. But the king himself was not averse to reaching some agreement with the British in order to secure the eighty or more villages which he controlled in the Gambia. In 1896, he wrote to Llewelyn asking him to "arrange with the French and let me know which of you I may choose. Now I am in a great fix," he

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 7th April, Llewelyn to Ripon.
2. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 16th March, Llewelyn to Knutsford re letter from Robert Syrett, Manager of MacCarthy Island.
3. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 16th March & 30th June, Llewelyn to Knutsford.
4. C.O. 87/158, 1899, vol.1. 15th June, Llewelyn to Joseph Chamberlain.

complained, "I cannot go anywhere."[1] In a later letter, he reminded the Governor that his predecessor had assured him that the British did not intend to do anything except delimit the boundary, and that the country would still be his.[2]

If the Governor was uneasy about the slow extension of British influence in the Upper River, Liberated Africans were thoroughly dissatisfied with the nature of the whole protectorate. They had long clamoured for an administrative machinery by which the native states would be brought more directly under the control of the Government in St. Mary's. Their first criticism of the proposed protectorate arose over the Trade Ordinance of 1893[3] which aimed at terminating endless disputes over customs between traders and native rulers.

1. C.O. 87/151, 1896, vol.1. Musa Molloh to Llewelyn, translated by I.H. Johnson, 18th January 1896.
2. C.O. 87/155, 1898, vol.1. C.O. Minute, 9th July, R.L.H.
3. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 20th May, Llewelyn to Knutsford;
   C.O. 87/144, 1893, vol.2. 25th October - An Ordinance to provide for the granting of annual Trade Licences - passed by the Legislative Council, enclosed in despatch of 31st Oct. 1893.
   Instead of paying £6.2s. directly to the Chief on arrival at his station, with the risk of further exactions once the trader commenced business, he was now to pay £10 p.a. for a factory Licence, £1.10s. for engaging in trade of whatever kind, and 4/- for dealing in corn, fish and salt.
   C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 20th May, Llewelyn to Ripon:
   Llewelyn at first proposed that about two-thirds of the Licence revenue should be returned to the native rulers.

It was not that the trade licences to be bought at the Treasurer's Office in Bathurst were prohibitive; it was the principle of this new form of taxation to which they objected. Llewelyn hoped to make it less costly for a trader to engage in trade in the River; and, by making the Treasurer's Office the receipt of customs, he aimed at bringing the native authorities more directly under the control of his Government, and to provide a balance of revenue to cover the expenses of the Commissioners. "The principle seems good," was the comment of Bramston of the Colonial Office, "but," he observed, "the Chiefs would appear to be the losers ...." For the salary now offered them in lieu of customs, though regular and easily attainable, was a far smaller figure than they had formerly received by direct control.

Urbanised African traders in native states now looked to the new administration for some form of compensation for hardships and losses suffered during the wars. With peace established, they assumed that free trade would automatically follow in its wake, and all customs and exactions abolished. They had never had much sympathy for the policies of native rulers who appeared to them as rapacious tyrants bent on exploiting traders who entered their territory. Nor had the civil war improved relations between them, even though such traders had played a significant role as intermediaries, and even as spies[1] during the recent disturbances; and they were to make their own contribution to protectorate administration.

Familiar with the political and social patterns of the towns they had traded in for many generations, they became a "very useful and obliging body" to Travelling Commissioners who were unaccustomed to conditions in the Gambia;

1. Secretariat Archives - Gambia, 8th January 1892, Report of Mr. Shyngle to Llewelyn.

and were "the greatest help ... in communicating with the Alcaides",[1] particularly as they were in a position to give "a great deal of reliable information ... on all subjects ...."[2] Their usefulness to the Government in the protectorate was unquestioned, but they objected to being rewarded by a discriminatory tax like the Traders Licence. To them the establishment of a protectorate was the dawn of a new era when the natives of the River would benefit economically and socially from direct control from the Government in Bathurst. It therefore did not make sense that they should continue to buy protection from chiefs and alcaides by indirect customs. That the Ordinance should have taken no account of the "scores of natives themselves who also engage in trade in their towns, and among them very often kinsmen or agents of the chiefs or alcaides themselves," was their bitterest grievance. Such discrimination, they argued, would only encourage the people in the protectorate "to consider Bathurst traders as their bankers on whom they can draw at leisure." The responsibility for maintaining native rulers ought to devolve upon their subjects, as a training in development and advancement.[3]

Their petition, however, did not bear fruit. By December 1893 the Act had been sanctioned, the Secretary of State pointing out to them that by Order in Council, the Legislative Council of the Gambia had obtained power to make laws for the protectorate which would be binding on British subjects and

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 16th June, annual Report - J.H.Ozanne.
2. C.O. 87/156, 1898, vol.2. 20th June, annual Report - Ozanne.
3. C.O. 87/144, 1893, vol.2. 23rd October, Memorial of Traders to Lord Ripon.

the subjects of European powers and any natives who had accepted the Queen's jurisdiction.[1] The protectorate states themselves, however, were "beyond the powers of the Legislative Council of the Gambia", for which reason those clauses in the Ordinance which referred to the punishment of unjust alcaides in the courts of Bathurst required amendment.[2] The amended Ordinance came into operation in 1895, and almost immediately swelled the judicial business of the Travelling Commissioners in the River states.

In the same year had appeared the Yard or Hut tax, by which every yardholder paid 1/- for every hut on his premises inhabited by a member of his family, and 2/- for every hut inhabited by a Stranger. It was a tax which fell entirely upon the natives themselves, and did not in any way affect urbanised traders in the River. With peace and growing prosperity the people were willing to pay the new tax imposed to swell the revenue, "appearing to recognise that in return for this taxation they can live peacably and cultivate their lands under British protection...."[3] It was a tax collected during the trade season, and would not seem to have been a burden; the Commissioners reported that they had "never had to seize anything ... and the collection has been done amongst themselves."[4] This tax brought the protectorate a stage nearer to the colony, placing all inhabitants on an equal footing. For in Bathurst, a house tax of 4/- per annum was in existence, while in British Combo

1. C.O. 87/144, 1893, vol.2. 4th Dec., Ripon to Llewelyn.
2. C.O. 87/144, 1893, vol.2. 15th Sept., Ripon to Llewelyn.
3. C.O. 87/156, 1898, vol.2. 2nd July, Report by P.Wainwright, Commissioner of MacCarthy Island District, to Llewelyn.
4. C.O. 87/156, 1898, vol.2. 30th June, J.H.Ozanne to Llewelyn.

a land tax equivalent to the same amount had been imposed for many decades.[1] The only exception was found in the Ceded Mile and MacCarthy Island, into which districts the Yard Tax was introduced by an Ordinance of 1896.[2]

With the new tax came the wider circulation of cash in the River states and the beginning of a social and economic revolution there, accelerated in large measure by the co-operation of French trading houses in the Gambia. If they had not been willing to open their factories in the River for the supply of cash, the tax could only have been collected in kind; for British merchants had always placed a restriction on the sending of specie up the River in order to perpetuate the barter trade.[3] They did not, however, approve of the important role of the French houses in the new protectorate, and for that reason decided to remove the restriction on specie for the time being. J.H. Ozanne, the Commissioner on the North Bank, described the situation as one which placed the Government "entirely in the hands of the merchants".[4] The merchants had not lost their influence in fiscal matters. While they assisted the Government to implement its policy in the protectorate by cash circulation, they were also creating a degree of economic independence among the peoples of the River, which was a significant aspect of the development of the protectorate.[5]

1. C.O. 87/152, 1896, vol.2. 7th November, Colonial Office Minute by Llewelyn.
2. C.O. 87/152, 1896, vol.2. 5th Sept., Ordinance passed by Legislative Council.
3. C.O. 87/151, 1896, vol.2. 1st July, Ozanne to Acting Governor Brandford Griffith.
4. Ibid.
5. C.O. 87/156, 1898, vol.2. 2nd July, C.F.Sitwell's annual Report; C.O. 87/159, 1899, vol.2. 30th June, J.H.Ozanne's annual Report.

Protectorate government was a compromise between Crown colony government and traditional rule in Mandinka societies. As the Secretary of State emphasised in 1893, neither Governor nor Commissioners had any legal authority over native rulers themselves; but, with them, the Commissioners could hear cases of dispute between British subjects and British protected persons under native law. River society had become a more complex structure of graded legal relationships between persons owing allegiance to the British Crown, and subjects of native rulers who were now protected by the Crown. The Commissioners became the co-ordinating factor between one state and another, and between all the states and the central Government; but the stabilising influence in the River was found in the age old institution of alcaides and village elders.

Ozanne's first annual report on the North Bank pointed to the simple dignity of the tribes and to the efficient rule of alcaide-almamy-elders. "I have never travelled anywhere and seen so little fighting and wrangling," he wrote. "I have come away from my District with a respect for these natives which I never could feel toward the negroes of the West Indies amongst whom I have lived for years." His report continued:- "Here the people manage their own affairs, live quietly and soberly together and keep their towns comparatively clean and healthy ... there [in Demerara] the people have shown themselves utterly incapable of governing themselves ... One cannot deny the fact that the Mahommedan out here shines by comparison with his civilized brother in the West."[1]

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 16th June, annual Report - Ozanne.

Indeed, so effective were existing native institutions in the River, that Governor Llewelyn had no difficulty in creating a village police out of the body of reliable messengers attached to the chiefs and alcaides. At a small monthly salary, he was able to get these 'badge messengers' to perform police duties economically and efficiently by virtue of knowing the countryside and the native languages.[1] In short, the administration of the protectorate was made fairly simple for the Commissioners by the adaptability of native institutions, and by Llewelyn's practical policy of constructing his new system upon indigenous patterns.

Involvement in border disputes was a far less simple aspect of the Commissioners' work in the protectorate. In general, disputes arose from the suspicions entertained by British and French officials of each other's activities on the frontier. Certainly both sides were determined not to lose any village if energy and diplomacy could prevent it. The geographical advantages of the Gambia River, with its deep creeks and rivulets capable of carrying gun-boats and river craft of all description, was an important factor in border disputes. The French grieved that their terrain around Nioro was an extensive plateau of ferreous rock over which land travel by camel, mule or horse was almost impossible since the hooves of these animals wore out with such rapidity.[2] It was therefore of no interest to them, as Lt.-Commander Morin emphasised in a report of 1895, to increase territory in this area; for

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 23rd March, Llewelyn to Ripon;
   C.O. 87/151, 1896, vol.1. 7th April, Llewelyn to Chamberlain.
2. A.O.F., Serie 1F, June 1893, Morin's Report to the Governor of Senegal;
   C.O. 87/156, 1898, vol.2. 30th June, annual Report - Ozanne.

the problems of an outlet for exports were insuperable.[1]

Inevitably, the produce from French territory followed southerly trade routes to trading depots situated on the creeks of the River Gambia. These were often little more than hamlets set up by traders and their clients during the annual Trade Season, which permitted easy access of goods to the main waterway. While they were envious of the facilities for transportation in the Gambia, French officials were unimpressed by its few villages producing just enough food for a meagre population, and quite incapable of supplying neighbours who might be attracted to move across the frontier and join them.[2]

French interest in the creeks of the Gambia was disturbing to Llewelyn, who feared that French officials contrived to control as many of the heads of the creeks as they could "so as to tax and prohibit produce from finding its way to the River Gambia."[3] It was a view supported by Mr. Antrobus of the Colonial Office who believed it was a fallacy in British policy to have supposed when the 1889 treaty was signed "that if we had the River and a strip of land ten kilometres in width on either side, we should get all the trade of the surrounding countries."[4] British advantages might even have been improved if their representatives in Paris had insisted on ten miles rather than ten kilometres as proposed by the French then.[5] Now, determined to

1. A.O.F., Serie 1F, 28th May 1895, Morin to the Secretary of State in Paris.
2. A.O.F., Serie 1F, June 1893, Morin's Report.
3. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 11th May, Llewelyn to Ripon; A.O.F., Serie 1F, 28th May 1893, Colonel Buderd, Commandant at Nioro, to Lamothe.
4. C.O. 87/155, 1898, vol.1. 9th July, C.O. Minute by R.L.A.
5. C.O. 87/158, 1899, vol.1. 15th June, Llewelyn to Chamberlain.

divert trade from its natural outlet down the Gambia, the French wanted "the boundaries defined in order that they may do this more effectually ...."[1] French officials on their part were fully aware, and complained constantly, of the British Governor's reluctance to speed up operations for the delimitation of the boundary, such delay being of advantage to his country.[2]

Anglo-French relations were particularly strained in an area between Niani and Upper Saloum, in which British flags had been planted before the delimitation of the boundary, in spite of the fact that the chiefs of many of the towns in those areas were under French protection and directly controlled from the divisional headquarters at Nioro. A joint Commission of 1893 cited Panchang and Pate, two of the disputed towns, at 10.543 kilometres and 20 kilometres, respectively, from the River, thereby justifying French fears of British encroachment in Niani.[3] It did not improve Anglo-French relations that on arriving at Panchang to join the British representatives of the Commission, Captain Morin, the French representative, found that the village had been deserted by its inhabitants. Morin naturally suspected the British Commissioner of having circulated ill-reports about French administration among the people of Panchang;[4] but Llewelyn thought the fault lay with the French themselves, "for the people are so afraid of [them] that they all wish me to say their towns are English. This is very galling to our neighbours...."[5]

1. C.O. 87/155, 1898, vol.1. 9th July, C.O. Minute by R.L.A.
2. A.O.F., Serie 1F, 28th May 1895, Morin's Report to the Political Minister in Paris.
3. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 9th May, Lt.-Commander E.Lang (one of the British representatives on the Boundary Commission) to Llewelyn.
4. A.O.F., Serie 1F, June 1893, Morin to Governor of Senegal, H.Lamothe.
5. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 12th April, private letter of Llewelyn to Hemming.

There would seem to have been some truth in this statement for the deserters of Panchang never returned once the town was given over to the French, preferring to migrate southwards to the wharftown of Nianibantang at the head of the Nianija creek.

Migration into British territory was not only a feature of border disputes in the North Bank; in the South Bank the frontier was also an irritant. French officers in the Casamance complained that the British Commissioner enticed French subjects across the frontier; but Llewelyn was confident that the new immigrants into British territory were chiefly Fodey Cabba's runaway slaves who were returning to their original homes in Fogni.[1] Voluntary emigration was, however, often confused with the distressing situation created by the artificiality of the boundary line itself, which might divide a farmer's village from his farm. Because of the depth of mangroves in some areas, towns were built inland and farms were situated further in the interior. A boundary line measured by a surveyor's chain at a rigid distance of ten kilometres from the River took no account of such niceties. In Llewelyn's words, "it is a little puzzling for [the farmer] to understand why the Whiteman should thus divide the country."[2]

The Governor of Senegal, however, saw the issue from the French viewpoint, objecting to a border situation where farmers could emigrate to British territory and yet hope to cultivate, at their leisure, on French soil because

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 25th March, Llewelyn to Ripon.
2. C.O. 87/158, 1899, vol.1. 24th June, Private letter of Llewelyn to R.L.Antrobus.

it was fertile. Indeed, the most productive areas were supposed to be those along the frontier. A solution to the problem was in fact suggested by the Commandant at Nioro who thought a policy of heavy taxation on Strange farmers was preferable to a prohibition from entry into French territory.[1] It was obvious that the natives on the frontier were often the victims of Anglo-French diplomacy; their interests were not infrequently subordinated to the political and territorial aspirations of the two European Powers. The border problem was partly relieved by an Agreement of the delimitation Commission of January 1896 to erect boundary marks near frontier villages, and to advise the two Governments that no tax should be levied in disputed villages, while the inhabitants of such villages were to be given six months to decide whether they would move into British or French territory.[2]

The Travelling Commissioners felt that British rule was fairly well accepted by indigenous peoples for its leniency, which contrasted with French rule. It would seem that chiefs in French Niani, for instance, did not exactly enjoy their subordinate status as agents of the Commandant at Nioro. Taxation under French administration was heavy (one franc per head in cash, and one franc in kind, compared with one shilling per hut, and namo[3] paid to chiefs,

1. A.O.F., Serie 1F., 28th May 1893, Colonel Buderd to H.Lamothe.
2. A.O.F., Serie 1F, 6th January 1896, Agreement signed at Jambol by Boundary Commissioners Ozanne, Reeve, Farque, Robert.
3. namo = foodstuff - refers to produce given to chiefs by farmers after the harvest.

under British administration), and was efficiently collected by the chiefs, the taxes being divided equally between the French Government and themselves. Penalties for non-payment of tax were severe and rigidly enforced.[1] Indeed, one reason for migration into the Gambia before the Yard Tax Ordinance of 1895 was because there was no taxation in the British Protectorate, outside the traditional customs paid in kind to the chiefs.

There were other aspects of French protectorate administration which were no more attractive than taxation. Not only did the administration at Nioro depend entirely on its chiefs for the provision of free labour for all public works, but military service was compulsory for all able-bodied youngmen in that protectorate. So much was military service resented by natives, that The Travelling Commissioners gave this as contributory reason for the mass exodus of French subjects across the frontier.[2] In MacCarthy Island District, Percy Wainwright, the Commissioner, estimated that fifteen new towns had been built by immigrants from French territory.[3] The argument was that indirect rule in the British protectorate through chiefs and alcaides had produced a kindly disposition towards British administrators. For under that pattern of government there was "not much cause for friction between them and the Commissioner ...."[4] Events on the South Bank, however, were shortly to alter this optimism.

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 16th June, annual Report - section on "Native Rule under French protection" - J.H.Ozanne.
2. C.O. 87/159, 1899, vol.2. 30th June, annual Report - Ozanne.
3. C.O. 87/156, 1898, vol.2. 2nd July, annual Report - P.Wainwright.
4. C.O. 87/156, 1898, vol.2. 30th June, annual Report, J.H.Ozanne.

For the moment, there was evidence of progress and stability in the British protectorate. In 1896, revenue collected in the protectorate amounted to £1,735.6.9d. while expenditure stood at £1,630. In 1897, the revenue had risen to £2,540.3.5d. and expenditure to £2,085.[1] It was during this period of growing prosperity that Governor Llewelyn called his first Chiefs' Conference in Bathurst with the object of making a cohesive unit of the districts under the new protectorate administration. This kind of gathering was a new experience for the chiefs, and was thoroughly exploited by Llewelyn to good effect. Government policy in the states under their control was elaborated upon at a general meeting of Chiefs, Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils held in Government House:- Protectorate revenue and its purposes, fees and allowances for chiefs and alcaides, the policing of towns and villages, the planning of new towns and improved methods of agriculture, were topics to which the Governor drew attention.

His comment in a despatch to Chamberlain was, that the conference was "considered to have been a great success."[2] It was remarkable that within four years of summoning refractory chiefs of the South Bank to Bathurst, his administration of the protectorate should so far have succeeded as to have made it possible to discuss development programmes with them with the certainty of receiving support. Llewelyn had inaugurated a Conference that has been a feature of protectorate government to the present day. Indeed,

1. C.O. 87/155, 1898, vol.1. 2nd May, Llewelyn to Chamberlain.
2. C.O. 87/151, 1896, vol.1. 7th April, Llewelyn to Chamberlain.

all seemed very satisfactory in the protectorate when the Governor finally left the Gambia in 1899. He had laid a firm foundation of British rule from the mouth of the River to MacCarthy Island, and had built up a growing revenue to provide for the services of the protectorate.

Confidence in a stable and fairly prosperous protectorate was shattered when in June 1900, the people of Sankandi in Western Kiang murdered the Travelling Commissioner, C.F. Sitwell, together with his assistant, Mr. Silva, Sergeant Cox and an escort of six policemen (all of them Africans of Bathurst). It was a dispute over some rice fields between the people of Sankandi and their neighbours in the town of Jattaba which had exploded a situation already highly charged.[1] This was evidence that Llewelyn had been a little too self-confident about the success of his plan in the River states, when it was known that Fodey Cabba, though an old man of nearly seventy years, had not lost his influence over the districts of Kiang and Jarra. Sitwell, too, had underestimated the tenacity of the Muslims of that region, partly because he had toured the South Bank for six years, and had apparently gained the confidence of many of its inhabitants, some of the chiefs like Mansa Koto of Jattaba showing deep loyalty to the British.[2]

1. C.O. 87/160, 1900, vol.1. 25th June, Brandford Griffith to Chamberlain.
2. C.O. 87/160, 1900, vol.1. 25th June, Griffith to Chamberlain.

But as early as 1893 opposition to the proposed protectorate had been openly demonstrated by some of the towns. In that year, the head alcaide of Buraing in East Jarra had issued orders that "if the Government enforces the License, Farm Rent and Slave Laws, they are to join Fodey Cabba." On first arriving in his district, Sitwell had found the rulers there determined to continue to collect the traditional revenues as had been the custom.[1] Domestic slavery had been a recognised institution of their society for centuries, and they were not prepared to abide by the Ordinance of 1898, which instructed all masters to register their slaves with the Commissioner, allowed slaves to purchase their freedom, and freed all newly imported slaves, as well as those whose masters had died.[2] Thus Abolition was intended to be gradual, but in the eyes of malcontents the Ordinance was radical. Beyond this, a new Protectorate Ordinance of 1898 had increased the powers of the Commissioners, and those of the Supreme Court in Bathurst over Native Courts.[3] Gradually, authority was passing out of the hands of the traditional rulers to the central Government and its agents in the River. The people knew this and resented it; and it was only "through fear [that] they profess friendship to the Government ...."[4] But no effective administration could be built upon fear and resentment; and it was inevitable that the revolt against the administration would come.

1. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 16th June, annual Report, C.F.Sitwell.
2. C.O. 87/159, 1899, vol.2. 10th Sept., C.F.Sitwell to the Colonial Office - on the application of the Ordinance on slavery.
3. C.O. 87/155, 1898, vol.1. 4th February, Llewelyn to Chamberlain.
4. C.O. 87/143, 1893, vol.1. 16th June, annual Report - C.F.Sitwell.

The Sankandi incident had repercussions throughout the protectorate; even in the most peaceful areas in the North Bank the spirit of revolt was kindled, and Muslim clerics tried to assume the power they had enjoyed under Maba and his successors. Ozanne described the situation in these words:- "The Commissioner may travel safely through the country, as long as he does nothing, but in certain parts it is not safe to hold Native Courts and make arrests."[1] Sitwell and his escort had been shot because they had entered a native town and attempted to arrest its chief and certain rebels by force. The perpetrators of the murders had then fled across the frontier and joined Fodey Cabba, while the whole River awaited British reprisals.[2]

The town of Sankandi was promptly destroyed, but, beyond that, nothing could be done without troops or gun boats. And it took the British Government a year to plan and execute the destruction of Fodey Cabba, who was supposed to have been the instigator of the rebels of Sankandi. Meanwhile, the Acting Governor admitted that it was a "very slender hold that we have over the people of the protectorate."[3]

The death of Fodey Cabba in March 1901 was the end of an epoch; effective British control could now be established over both banks of the River, and over Musa Molloh's state. Molloh had agreed to bring Fehrdou into the protectorate system in return for an annual salary of £500.[4] Thus the

1. C.O. 87/161, 1900, vol.2. 28th Dec., Ozanne to Griffith.
2. C.O. 87/160, 1900, vol.1. 25th June, H.M.B.Griffith to Chamberlain.
3. C.O. 87/160, 1900, vol.1. 28th June, Griffith to Chamberlain.
4. C.O. 87/163, 1901, vol.2. 7th June, Sir George Denton to Chamberlain.

entire area which fell to Britain by the Paris Agreement of 1889, had now come under British administration. Governor Llewelyn had attempted to establish peaceful government in the River during his years in the Gambia; and had earned the admiration of the French for his introduction of Travelling Commissioners into the protectorate system. But there was no good reason why Muslim chiefs and supporters, who had fought for half a century to concentrate power in their own hands, should in the end have acquiesced under European domination. Perhaps Llewelyn had been too hasty in declaring a protectorate over the South Bank, and less inclined to negotiate with the 'rebels' of that region than with Musa Molloh. Nevertheless, it was a tribute to his achievements in the River that Governor George Denton, his successor, was able to continue to promote the welfare of the people of the Gambia, with their cooperation.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

It will be the purpose of this chapter to outline the stage of development reached by those communities in the colony area which had been under direct British control since 1816, and to consider to what extent they had fulfilled some of their own aspirations. By the 'eighties, Bathurst, the capital of the Gambia, contained many of the institutions of a British colony on the West Coast of Africa - a Governor with an Executive Council, and a semi-representative Legislative Council, a fairly well-organised Civil Service, a commercial centre with harbour facilities, churches and schools. And its six thousand inhabitants lived in 110 stone houses, 137 wooden houses, and about 1400 wattle huts.[1] The census of 1901 was to show an increase in population of nearly 3000, with an expanding African and European population, and a decreasing Mulatto community. A reduction of wattle huts and an increase in stone houses, and particularly in wooden houses indicated some improvement in economic circumstances among the inhabitants of the town. Within this society of less than ten thousand, however, nearly one thousand were entered as unemployed by the Census enumerators of 1901.[2]

In eighty-five years of British rule, the Governor's role as ultimate authority in a British colony had not undergone significant changes, but

1. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 13th April, R.B.Llewelyn to Lord Knutsford.
2. C.O. 87/163, 1901, vol.2. 18th June, S.J.Forster, Jnr., to the Governor.

Government policy had often been modified by articulate public opinion. Sometimes opinion had only represented the interests of a particular community or commercial group, but it could never be ignored on that score alone. While controlling the reins of government, colonial Governors had grown accustomed to receiving advice from official bodies like the legislature or Sanitary Boards, as from particularistic organisations like the Gambia Native Association. Over many decades, out of the interdependence of communities which composed the town of Bathurst, a society had emerged with recognizable goals for its citizens, a society within which the dominant group established its claims to leadership. In the early decades of the settlement, this dominant role was played by a small and dynamic body of British merchants in the social and economic field, the Governor or Administrator with, or without, a nucleus of officials, being responsible for interpreting Colonial policy as despatched to him.

By the 'eighties and 'nineties, the Liberated African-Creole[1] community had effectively shaken the foundations of the European mercantile power without, however, displacing it; and, by dint of hard work and personal sacrifice, had improved their state of economic dependence and infiltrated social areas hitherto the precincts of Europeans. As importers of kola nuts and British manufactures, and as exporters of groundnuts, they began to compete with the private British merchants, whose days were numbered, and their position further

1. Creole - used in the West African sense to mean the descendants of Settlers and Liberated Africans. Cf. Arthur Porter, "Creoledom", (O.U.P., 1963) p.51.

threatened by the appearance of companies and combines in the limited Gambia market. It was very largely through the opportunities offered in the transitional stage from private business to large commercial firms that African entrepreneurs availed themselves of property in what was the European and commercial centre. Profits accumulated from the kola trade enabled the Richards family, for example, to purchase a building in Wellington Street, which they named "Kola buildings", while J.D. Richards was planning to erect a magnificent edifice in Albion Place with stone from the Canary Islands. Following the same pattern, other entrepreneurs - S.J. Forster, H.R. Carrol, Jones Brothers, J.E. Mahoney, invested hard won profits in substantial houses in Wellington Street, Russell Square and Buckle Street. The circumstances of trade of the late nineteenth century, had enabled these families to move up the social scale (formerly reserved for Europeans and Mulattoes) from relatively modest beginnings.[1] Their ancestors had formed the class of artisans and small traders in Bathurst or Freetown in the mid-nineteenth century.

With economic and social prestige had come political recognition; and in 1883 J.D. Richards had been nominated the first African representative to the Legislative Council. The Governor-in-Chief had recommended the need for a representative from "a numerous class of small traders, natives of the Gambia or of Sierra Leone, whose views and interests appear to conflict with those of

1. Information was collected from the late Mr. Cecil Richards, from Mr. Henry Jones, Mr. Henry Carrol and Sir John Mahoney about the businesses of their fathers.

the European merchants."[1] And Gouldsbury, the Administrator, nominated Richards "a respectable trader and shopkeeper",[2] because he was articulate in defending the interests of his class, and would be a useful check on the mercantile oligarchy. His role as a member of the Legislative Council was a significant stage in the political awareness and development of his community. Indeed, so articulate was he in the Council Chamber and outside it, that G.T. Carter, when acting Administrator in 1887 recommended the termination of his commission for being an obstructionist to Government policy. But in press and by letter, Richards continued to press forward the views of the so-called radical element.

The African community had not, however, lost representation in Council with the removal of Richards, for, in 1886, S.J. Forster had been recommended for nomination as "very intelligent and thoroughly conversant with native affairs ... [and] already a J.P. ...."[3] With this new member also sat J.R. Maxwell, Queen's Advocate and later Chief Magistrate, as ex-officio member. In the Councils (for he was also a member of the Executive Council), he fulfilled the role of an official, albeit with an African bias; but he found outlet for his personal opinions on issues of the day - the Negro Question, which occupied the minds of many of his contemporaries like Blyden, the role of Europeans in West Africa - in his own writings.[4] He appears to have held

1. C.O. 87/119, 1882, vol.2. 27th Nov., A.E.Havelock to Secretary of State.
2. C.O. 87/119, 1882, vol.2. 21st Nov., Gouldsbury to Havelock.
3. C.O. 87/126, 1886 vol.2. 5th August, I.J.S.Hay to Edward Stanhope.
4. J.R.Maxwell, "Advantages and Disadvantages of European intercourse with the West Coast of Africa", (London, 1881); also "The Negro Question", (London, 1892).

himself aloof from society in order to safeguard his honour, for as a Judge in an African settlement where one of the leading members of the Bar was his own brother-in-law, he was determined not to be involved in cliques that might influence his judgment.[1] The unfortunate result was that in the social field, at least, he was a loss to his own community.

As a result of petitions for greater representation in the legislature, Governor Llewelyn instituted a system of indirect election in 1895, whereby a confidential circular was issued to all jurors, magistrates, and professional gentlemen in the colony in order that they should nominate three candidates for appointment as unofficial members of Council. But so determined was the Government to exclude radical elements from the legislature, that even though Richards gained 49 votes against 34 votes given to S.J. Forster, he was deliberately passed over, and Forster retained his seat. Again in 1900, he gained one vote more than Forster, but acting Governor Griffith could not recommend his nomination because he was "undoubtedly faddy and would be inclined to oppose all measures by the Government ... [and] would only prove a stumbling block in the way of the Council ...." Richards was further described as representing the Sierra Leone community in Bathurst, while Forster was regarded as representing the Gambians, who had much confidence in him, as had the Europeans too. "He cannot be regarded as an active member of Council," continued Griffith, "but I can safely say that he is a much more useful member than Mr. Richards would be ...."[2]

1. C.O. 87/131, 1887 vol.2. 11th August, Petition of J.D.Richards & others for the continuance of Maxwell in the Gambia Service.
2. C.O. 87/161, 1900 vol.1. 6th Dec., H.M.B.Griffith to Chamberlain.

A situation had risen then in the colony where the interests of Liberated Africans of Bathurst were being distinguished from those of Sierra Leone immigrants. The fact that all senior and middle grades in the Civil Service open to Africans continued to be filled by Sierra Leone natives did not please the Gambians, and created tensions in the society, which obstructed African development.

Nevertheless, in the field of local government, Richards attempted to introduce the elective principle, and to secure funds which would be controlled by the Board of Health of which he was a member. It was as late as 1887 that the first Public Health Ordinance was passed for the colony and a Board of ten men appointed as a "result of the efforts of some of the intelligent native population of this colony for the establishment of a Town Council ...."[1] But after a brief existence, the Ordinance seemed to have remained a dead letter, partly because members would not attend meetings because they were too busy with trade," or else someone refuses to serve because he is not on friendly terms with some other nominated member ...." This was Llewelyn's view; and he suspected Richards of being ambitious to be chairman of the Board.[2] Certainly there were grievances against the constitution of a Board that had no authority to act by its own resolutions, to hire a building for storing its property, or even to employ labourers for cleaning the town, without the Governor's sanction.[3] But Llewelyn was not

1. C.O. 87/141, 1892 vol.1. 17th March, Petition of Richards, Edmund Thomas, F.G. nJie and others to R.B.Llewelyn.
2. C.O. 87/141, 1892 vol.1. 13th April, R.B.Llewelyn to Knutsford.
3. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 17th March, Petition

prepared, either to introduce elections into local government, or to increase the Board's control over the expenditure of funds provided from rates, a privilege that would have provided valuable training for Africans. Unfortunately, "the state of education here is not sufficiently advanced for any sort of representative Government, and the various nationalities ... would render such a step most impolitic ...."[1] This was the Governor's decision.

The appalling state of education was in the final analysis the problem of the colony area. It was no unfamiliar problem, but over the decades no solution had been found, and far from improving, the Wesleyan schools, which were the oldest in the settlement, had deteriorated. This meant that the efforts of isolated characters like Richards, with their demands for more effective participation in the Government, were bound to fail while the masses in their midst were poor and ignorant. Economic well-being and enlightenment were limited to a very small percentage of the population; for much depended on the energy put into scaling the barriers from small trader to entrepreneur, or from refugee to trader. The unhealthy credit system of the groundnut trade had destroyed many a small trader, so that by the 'eighties and 'nineties, they had either been reduced to abject poverty, by debts, or confined in gaol for the same reason. It was therefore the Sierraleone trader, who, arriving in the colony with a little capital and industrious womenfolk, was able to

1. C.O. 87/140, 1891, vol.2. Llewelyn to Secretary of State.

survive the vicissitudes of the Gambia trade of the late nineteenth century.

For that reason, the colony was not ready for the first Education Ordinance of 1882, by which Government grants to the schools were to be determined by school attendance and attainment. Far from stimulating progress, and producing the required results, the schools in the first few years after the Ordinance came into effect earned very little financial aid through pupils, who could not reach the required standard, and who had always been most irregular at school. Apart from the Roman Catholic schools, which soon began to score points by their concentration on industrial training for girls - needlework, cookery, laundry - the annual education reports from 1883 to 1901 presented a most depressing picture. The Inspectors of Schools - African and European - deplored an "abnormally low standard" of education.

W.C. Cates, a native of Sierra Leone who was appointed as Inspector in 1883, suggested three main reasons for the "lethargic state of Education in the settlement ...." The main cause he ascribed to the absence of trained teachers of the right kind; with the pathetically low salary scale, youngmen were not attracted to the profession, preferring to seek employment in Government or mercantile houses. Cates also found public opinion generally apathetic about education, except as an economic proposition that might get the child a job upon leaving school. For that reason, not only were children kept away from school in the Trade Season when they accompanied their parents to trading stations in the River, but many children were removed from school altogether as soon as they could earn a living. Yet a third reason, was "that

the major portion of the population are either Mahommedans or Heathens who do not care to send their children to Christian schools."[1]

This last reason was what Wesleyan Missionaries constantly held to in justification of their own failures. In 1881 the Rev. Robert Dixon wrote: "Mohammedanism being such a proponderating element in the population in these parts, makes this a specially difficult field to work and accounts for the Mission not having made more progress, tho' so long established."[2] But Islam apart, the content of education in the schools was evidently of a poor quality. It was of one of Dixon's infants schools that the Inspector for 1884 reported that instruction was limited to "a loose indolent teaching of the Wesleyan Conference Catechism which the children repeat by rote with a few sacred hymns etc." The report continued:- "Lessons on common things if taught at all are evidently not taught to much advantage."[3]

This was the tragedy, not that Muslims and other communities were not yet ready for secular education of a western kind, but that those who were attending school, were receiving such poor education, added to which schooling was practically limited to six months of the year, as to be of very little benefit either to the pupils themselves or to the society in which they lived. One Inspector ruthlessly remarked that taking the entire population of Bathurst "at the lowest reckoning, there is less than 1 in 400 educated; and there are scarcely 50 who can even boast of a sound elementary education."[4] And this was

1. C.O. 87/122, 1884, vol.1. 24th Dec. 1883, Education Report by W.C.Cates to the Governor.
2. Methodist Missionary Library, Gambia Correspondence, 1881, the Rev. Robert Dixon to the Rev. Kilner.
3. C.O. 87/122, 1884, vol.1. 24th Dec., 1883 Report, W.C.Cates to the Governor.
4. Ibid.

in 1884!

The Government had to take partial responsibility for this state of affairs, for it was very soon obvious that an Education Ordinance and the provision of an Inspector for three to four weeks of every year were not likely by themselves to produce results. Education required to be less haphazardly organized and more generously supported from public funds. The steady growth of schools and qualified teachers in Sierra Leone had been the result of fostering care by missions, government and the people themselves. In the Gambia, while the greater proportion of persons in the colony area was composed of aliens and other displaced persons, there was all the more reason for a paternalistic attitude towards educational needs. For equipped with little more than their labour to sell, such persons were preoccupied with rehabilitation and economic pressures and not with educational programmes. And while the masses were not yet ready to respond it was not possible to impose education upon their children in the way the Government planned to do it.

Indeed, the Roman Catholics pointed to the magnitude of the problem connected with the education of alien children apprenticed to Guardians in Bathurst:- "In a community such as ours, where so many different tribes and tongues go to make up the population ... rewards to educational effort as measured by results must necessarily be a very unfair and indeed ... a mischievous system .... that the Serer, the Jolof, the Jolah and the Mandingo, who never speak a word of English in their homes should be put in competition

with the English speaking child [the Liberated African - Creole] .... seems quite inexplicable."[1] Another grievance of the Roman Catholic church was that the Education Ordinance had involved them in heavy expenditure with its stipulation that English was to be the medium of instruction. This had necessitated a change in their community of Nuns, and the provision of five new Sisters from Britain "to teach English instead of French and Jolof", all at the expense of the mission.[2] While the missionary bodies themselves were so dissatisfied with the terms and working of the Ordinance, so long was development in the educational field hindered.

Though there was no lack of ideas for tackling the problems of education, it seemed impossible to provide funds for experiment, and to secure agreement for such experiment from the communities in Bathurst. There were those who wanted a Government Model School after the Sierra Leone pattern, which would serve the needs of Muslim and Pagan children as no mission school could;[3] others there were (among them R.B.Marke, Inspector of schools) who proposed the founding of a boarding school in MacCarthy island, "into which promising youths may be drafted from the out stations, similar to the process adopted by the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast." But the adoption of such a scheme, he warned, "would require a serious ... organization."[4]

1. C.O. 87/133, 1888 vol.2. 23rd June, J.F.Gleeson to the Governor.
2. C.O. 87/133, 1888 vol.2. 23rd June, Gleeson to Governor.
3. C.O. 87/125, 1885 vol.2. 7th August, Gambia Native Association to Administrator.
4. C.O. 87/158, 1899 vol.1. 11th July, R.B.Marke to Governor; C.O. 87/152, 1896 vol.2. 26th June, C.F.Sitwell to Governor:- Recommended the establishment of an institution in the Protectorate modelled on the Scotch Industrial Mission in Uganda.

In fairness to the Government, it must be stated that successive Governors showed genuine interest in providing special schools for Muslim children, and had the Muslim community in Bathurst responded to these overtures, progress would certainly have been made in that direction. In 1890, Carter reported that he had held several interviews with the leaders of the Muslim community about the education of their children, but internal divisions among them prevented them from working together even for a common object like education.[1] The following year, Llewelyn got no satisfaction from his September meeting with the principal Muslims of British Combo on the same subject; indeed "they were still considering what I told them in May and begged for more time ...." But the Governor concluded that they had in fact made up their minds against his proposals for education.[2] Nor did Llewelyn find better response in Bathurst where the Muslim community was most reluctant to submit any scheme for the consideration of Government with a view to receiving financial support from it. In self defence, the Almamy and his followers submitted that they owned no buildings that might be converted for school purposes, nor was the Muslim community sufficiently well-to-do to contribute towards a school for their children.[3] When Governor Denton arrived in the colony in 1901 from Lagos, one of his first concerns was education; and he was able to reach an agreement with the Almamy whereby his

1. C.O. 87/137, 1890, vol.1. 1st March, G.T.Carter to Secretary of State.
2. C.O. 87/140, 1891, vol.2. 3rd Sept. R.B.Llewelyn to Secretary of State.
3. C.O. 87/141, 1892, vol.1. 18th June, Llewelyn to Secretary of State.

people would provide a school building with equipment, while the Government would pay the teachers.[1] In 1903, the first Mohammedan school in the Gambia was opened with 126 pupils.

Education in a wider and less formal sense had been the concern of the sprinkling of educated Africans in the colony. They had reached a stage of development where they demanded a superior education for their own children than that available in the Gambia. The result was a continuous outflow of potential from the secondary school population of Bathurst, which inevitably stunted the growth of the Wesleyan Boys' High School founded in 1879 to meet their needs. Until the Second World War, it was the accepted pattern of education for children of Sierra Leone descent, and from middle class families of the Gambia, to complete their formal education in one of the secondary schools in Freetown. A few, like the Rev. George Nicol - Colonial Chaplain - who had benefitted from institutions of higher education in England, sent their children there, at great financial cost. Not only was this for the prestige value attached to an English education, but they believed that in that direction lay their hopes "for the progress of abstract civilization in West Africa,"[2] and the speedy emancipation of its colonies.

1. C.O. 87/163, 1901 vol.2. 15th May, George Denton to the Bathurst Board of Education.
2. Maxwell, "The Advantages and Disadvantages of European Intercourse".

Within the West African situation, they sought through the Press, through public lectures, indeed, through the church, to educate public opinion in urban areas. Certainly, this role was true of Nicol who was a promoter of the Bathurst Observer, the first local newspaper founded in 1883 with the West Indian barrister, Chase Walcott, as proprietor and Editor. Its purpose was stated clearly in its own columns:- "To create a love of reading generally in the community and to assist in its social, moral and intellectual advancement is the raison d'etre of this paper .... Our Settlement is the oldest on the coast. The time has come, we believe, to give utterance of its own life and aspirations and to assert its claim to a distinctive individuality."[1] Short-lived though it was, the paper was a most effective platform for commercial and economic debates in the 'eighties; and it certainly got support from a cross-section of the mercantile community, even if the wider public remained indifferent.

Nicol was convinced that this indicated the need for a Reading Room and Lending Library, and appealed for popular support, while he promised to provide books and periodicals from his friends in England. In his view, such an educative organ was "absolutely necessary ... in the present state of our political and social progress."[2] For the same reason, he undertook to organize a series of popular lectures on scientific and general subjects, ranging from astronomy and agriculture, to the Importance of Sanitation, and

1. Bathurst Observer, 27th January 1885.
2. Bathurst Observer, 29th April 1884.

Readings from English authors "to help natives with articulation of English words."[1] But attendance at the first two meetings was so disappointing as to provoke an article in the Observer entitled "The Native Youths of Bathurst". The writer was concerned that such neglect of opportunities offered for educational development indicated a lack of ambition to emulate great West Africans as Crowther, Blyden, Samuel Lewis, "who stand out as shining examples of what Africans can become ...."[2] In their own way, and on their own initiative, Nicol and his friends attempted to raise the cultural and intellectual level of their community, but their plans were premature, and so they failed.

This nucleus neither carried public opinion with it nor secured official support for its programmes for cultural development. Indeed, Carter despised Nicol for attempting to educate his children in England on a salary of £450 per annum, which caused him serious financial embarrassment. And the Administrator's recommendation for his retirement in 1886 was firmly supported by the Bishop of Sierra Leone, who described him as a "man, full of good intentions, but terribly, terribly weak and very vain."[3] However unappreciative of eighteen years' service in the Gambia this was, Nicol had made his own unique contribution to the building of the Anglican church and school in Bathurst, and, beyond this, he had attempted to educate public opinion on major issues of his day. He could not do more.

1. Bathurst Observer, 17th February 1885.
2. Bathurst Observer, 10th March 1885.
3. C.O. 87/129, 1886 vol.3. 18th Dec., Bishop of Sierra Leone to John Bramston of Colonial Office.

It has been the intention of this Chapter to focus on the Liberated African - Creole community in the colony, notwithstanding its numerical insignificance, because within this community in the Gambia, as in Sierra Leone, were to be found the leaders who were to change the political face of British West Africa. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Mulatto community had dwindled to 116, according to the census of 1901. This decline in numbers was partly because European merchants and officials had almost abandoned the practice of living with or marrying local women, and Mulattoes at the periphery of their own community had become absorbed in the more dominant communities of the society. With economic success and Western education, a Mulatto merchant like H.C. Goddard soon merged in with the European community, eventually retiring to England where he settled with an English wife in Brighton. Similarly, Mulattoes at the bottom of the economic and social scale were as easily absorbed into the Goree-Wolof community. Generally speaking, only a handful of this social group engaged in business as entrepreneurs at the end of the century, for the gradual withdrawal of patronage by the white community brought with it economic decline and loss of social status.

As the foregoing indicates, significant changes were taking place in attitudes towards literate Africans, which inevitably affected community relationships in the Settlement. Among other factors, the emergence of a Liberated African - Creole nucleus of business and professional men, senior

civil servants and churchmen, the displacement of the private British merchant by trading companies, and, by far the most important, the fundamental change that had taken place in British colonial policy since Partition, produced tensions between Europeans and Africans. Two incidents in the 'eighties illustrate this change in attitudes - that J.R. Maxwell, who was doing private practice in the Gold Coast in 1883, should have been offered the post of Queen's Advocate in the Gambia, when an Englishman had applied for it, on the principle that "when there is a really good native available ... he should, if possible, be employed."[1] In contrast to this view, stands the Bishop of Sierra Leone's judgment on the retirement of the Rev. George Nicol, Colonial Chaplain of Bathurst, and the Rev. Thomas Maxwell, Colonial Chaplain of Cape Coast:- "I am of opinion that ... £250 at the most is all you need pay a native Chaplain at Bathurst and Gold Coast ... it would be ... far better if Europeans filled these posts always, at any rate so long as you have European officials ..."[2]

Between 1816 and 1901, articulate public opinion had not always supported Government policy, but an element of trust and confidence in the goodwill of the British Government was contained in most petitions. Once race relations were seriously disturbed in the Gambia Settlement, as elsewhere on the West Coast of Africa, public opinion was to be organized as a weapon against Government.

1. C.O. 87/120, 1883 vol.1. 3rd May, C.O. Minute, R.L.A. to Meade.
2. C.O. 87/129, 1886 vol.3. Bishop of Sierra Leone to J.Bramston.

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i.COLONIAL OFFICE SERIES: in the PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, London.

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C.0.267/93, The Rowan Commission of Enquiry into the West African Settlements.

C.0.267/173, The Madden COMMISSION, 1841.

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After 1827, the Gambia documents are kept separately in the series C.0.87/

C.0.87/1 to C.0.87/163, inclusive, are the volumes on which this investigation is based. (1828-1901).

C.0.90/ series: Blue Book of Statistics (Population figures, Civil Establishments, Lists of Government Officers, Imports & Exports etc).

C.0.90/24, C.0.90/44, C.0.90/64 are the volumes studied.

C.0.15891: Memorandum of Association of the RIVER GAMBIA TRADING CO.LTD Registered and Incorporated, 17th Sept. 1881.

The C.0.267/ series on Senegal and Goree form a useful and necessary background study for the history of the Gambia in the nineteenth century. The volumes provide equally valuable material for the early years of the settlement on St Mary's Island.

The C.0.87/ documents are invaluable for any comprehensive or detailed study of the colony; and this thesis is largely the result of a thorough investigation into this source. For, apart from ample material providing a cross-section of official opinion, there is a wealth of unofficial material contained within official despatches - petitions and private letters from representative groups in the Gambia, as well as from mercantile and philanthropic bodies in England, with interests in that colony.

PRIMARY SOURCES: Unpublished.

ii. Archives of the Government of the Gambia:

There is no organised archives department in the Gambia, and the research student is obliged to rummage for material in a basement store-room, officially called the Secretariat Archives. Hours or days of discomfort might be rewarded by the sudden discovery of an interesting file; for the documents are unbound, and uncatalogued. This makes it very difficult to record the material collected from this source in any kind of sequence. I have therefore used the title - Secretariat Archives - to distinguish them from other documents referred to in the text.

While very little is now available of early nineteenth century records (most of them having been disposed of as litter), there is a substantial amount of late nineteenth, ~~century~~ and early twentieth, century material.

Some of the more relevant historical documents of the period (among them Governors' despatches, letters in arabic and in translation from Fodey Cabba's supporters, registers of apprentices, the official diary of the Manager of British Combo, covering a number of years,) are preserved in Government House, and in the Lands Office.

I. PRIMARY SOURCES: Unpublished.

iii. Archives of the Government of Senegal: in Dakar.

This is an important collection of documents, in the care of an archivist, for it contains material on Anglo-French relations in Senegal and the Gambia in the nineteenth century, with detailed documentation of the latter part of the period. Two spools of microfilm in the series 1F were provided for my use, one of which I have studied.

This French source has been particularly valuable as a counterpoise to the British material, thereby showing Anglo-French boundary disputes in clearer perspective. Further, observations on economic and social problems of frontier tribes, consequent upon the delimitation of the boundary, are penetrating. And comparisons drawn between French, and British, administration in the protectorates of the respective territories are not only interesting, but are of some significance.

iv. Archives of the Wesleyan Missionary Society: in library of METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY, London.

This is not a fruitful source for the work of early Wesleyan missionaries in the Gambia, material being almost limited to condensed annual reports. A selected number of these, for the years between 1878 and 1902, was studied. But documents relating to the question of 'Cession' were not consulted since they had already been used by J.D.Hargreaves for his study on the Gambia.

iv. Archives of the Wesleyan Missionary Society: in Bathurst,Gambia.

This collection was found to be the more valuable and interesting of the two. Documents are preserved in the Methodist Mission House; and are clearly classified. Among those I studied were the following:

District Meeting Books for St Mary's,and MacCarthy Island, 1841-1904.

Wesleyan Registers of Baptisms,Marriages, Deaths, 1831-1899.

Circuit Books, 1835-1858. (These contained the Accounts of the Mission).

The Registers were useful for providing a realistic picture of evangelisation in the early years of the settlement; while the Circuit Books indicated the economic status of the congregations. The most valuable source,however, was the District Meeting Book (the 'Meeting' was an embryonic 'Synod') with its fairly detailed minutes on the yearly review of the Mission's work. Beyond this, it indicated attitudes of the missionaries towards their African assistants, and growing tensions within the church in the period.

With these documents were considered the published works of early missionaries, in particular, Fox-"A Brief History," Moister-"Missionary labours," and Morgan- "Reminiscences."

There were no records available in the Anglican church, except for Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths for the late nineteenth century.

I.PRIMARY SOURCES: Unpublished.

v. Newspapers: The British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale.

The African Times (London), volumes from 1860- 1901 consulted. Until the death of the Editor, Fitzgerald, in 1884, particular emphasis was given to the affairs of the Gambia in this paper.

The Bathurst Observer and West Africa Gazette (Bathurst). The paper was short-lived - 1883-1888. All the volumes studied. Available in the Royal Commonwealth Society Library.

These newspapers are complementary to the official documents in the C.O.series; together they were an effective organ for articulate opinion in the Gambia.

The Liverpool Mercury:
Issues of the paper in the 'seventies contained numerous letters from persons living in the Gambia on the unsatisfactory state of affairs in the colony. But only cuttings enclosed in official documents were studied.

vi. Archives of the United Africa Company: in U.A.C.House, Blackfriars. Volumes relevant to the history of the GAmbia, and consulted by me:

The Letter Book of Lloyd's Agent in the Gambia, 1853-1896. Only a selection of these letters is available.

Lloyd's Vessels to and from the Gambia.

Miscellaneous Papers 1863 -1893 - a selection available.

These documents throw light on commercial transactions in the Gambia, especially as conducted by Lloyd's Agents - William Goddard, H.C.Goddard The latter was also Manager of the [redacted] River Gambia Trading Company.

PRIMARY SOURCES: Published and Unpublished.

vii. General.

For the study of traditional societies in the River Gambia, the accounts of contemporaries - traders, scientific explorers, casual travellers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been drawn upon. Francis Moore's Journal, for example, is valuable because he writes as a trader among traders, albeit African traders; so that the result is an informative account of the society in which he lived in the River. Less useful are the superficial, and sometimes exaggerated, reports of European travellers of the nineteenth century. With discfimination, it is possible to reconstruct a realistic picture of Bathurst and the riverain states, from these sources, in a way ~~which~~ could not from official documents.

ORAL MATERIAL:

While there are no private papers preserved in family cupboards as in Nigeria, there is a nucleus of Gambian merchants, whose businesses collapsed in the slump of the 'twenties, and who can still give useful information on commercial activity in the colony at the turn of the century. Among them, Mr Henry Jones was the most instructive.

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